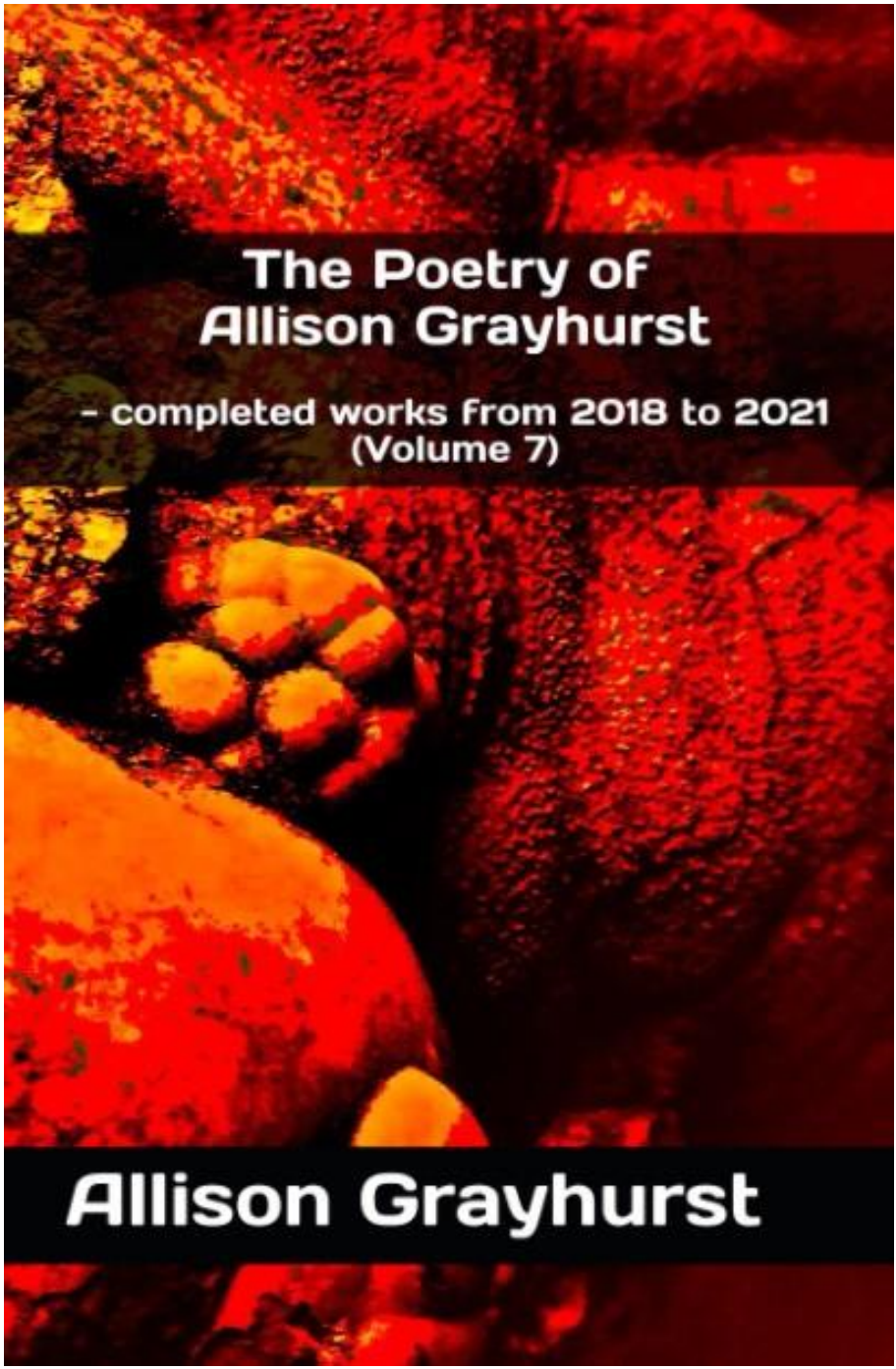
The Poetry of
Allison Grayhurst
- completed works from 2018 to 2021
(Volume 7)
Allison Grayhurst

# *The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst*
## *– completed works from 2018 to 2021 (Volume 7)*

***Animal Culture (rules of commitment)***
***If I Knew This Haunting***
***Ways of Mercy***


# *Allison Grayhurst*



***Edge Unlimited Publishing***

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**- completed works from 2018 to 2021 (Volume 7)**
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**by Allison Grayhurst**

# Animal Culture

*(rules of commitment)*

Allison Grayhurst

# *Animal Culture*
# *(rules of commitment)*

***Do animals have culture?***
***Yes! The great wisdom***
***of Earth spoke.***

***And She spoke –***
***Having faith in God***
***is trusting God's faithfulness.***

*


## *Allison Grayhurst*



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# *Cardinal*

# Now That I Swept

**I swept the veranda**
**I swept the hall**
**I swept in corners I turned**
**a blind-eye at before.**
**The encasing cracked. The bride's dress**
**was lifted out of the attic into sunlight.**
**There was paint on the windows. I scraped**
**it off, exposing galleries of creepy-crawlers**
**and prayers half-prayed**
**still writhing on the floor, struggling**
**for breath and completion.**
**I showed courage, even killed my longest ties,**
**bought bread at a new store and accepted the storm.**

**This home-swept sterility has outlasted fears,**
**sermons of aestheticism dug deep to remove**
**the pus from my wounds.**
**I count - one - two - each heartache**
**quietly. I turn the gas on and wait for heat.**

**I am not comfortable without clutter.**
**I cannot soar in this crate,**
**with manicured belongings and my attention given over**
**to such ruthless unending details. The old has died.**
**This new is not my home, but my desires will layer up**
**again, roll in the wind again, collect**
**broken robin shells, leaf stems, and shed animal fur.**

*******

**It will feel like home sometime after**
**I am sure my fears have been defeated,**
**when I can trust myself not to pillage,**
**loiter or take for granted.**
**Blessings, hair-ties, a time of ginger tea.**

**I swept and now everything is clean.**
**I swept, and slowly I will let life back in,**
**but not before inspecting the truth of its charm**
**and the smell of its comfort.**
**Where it twitches and cramps, I will bear witness**
**to its intricacies, suffer the host as a hymn**

**hymn, hymn, to hold over the flame, in spite**
**of the other voices I hear, despite the echoing screams,**
**strip it, swept clear of shame**
**and these stultifying drift banks**
**I have swept**
**of a coward's hidden-away rot and rubble.**

# Identity (as self to self before God)

**Identity as explorer,**
**as an eagle with a powerful spread,**
**or as a sparrow, budding delicate, stirring**
**tenderness in others.**
**Identity as a mother, as a single flame monk**
**in the 4 a.m. quiet, under a dome, encased**
**in creativity and loneliness. Identity**
**as drink, poverty, excessive cash flow or beauty**
**beside the grave of the visibly mediocre.**

**Identity in discipline or free-spirit strength**
**that enriches the landscape with humour and charm.**
**Identity as a man whose skin has become core,**
**and the burden of time has passed through his sky**
**like a setting moon.**

**Stoic or gregarious, just the shape of a cloud,**
**changing, merging with other clouds**
**than dissipating. Speaking - backwards, forwards -**
**when the bearer of that identity dares to skip over the madness**
**of self-loathing, self-congratulating, skip**
**the moan in summer, the ovation indoors**

**and be in love,**
**like when first in love, ever swallowing**
**the joy into the fear, then the fear into joy,**
**the how-can-this-be? the will-I-ever-be-pure-enough?**
**struggling to keep up with such a devouring-bliss. Devour me,**
**more, more, let it be, be what never rests,**
**what is always too much, always**
**electrified, perfect. Heal me of identities,**
**allow me to step longing for divinity with every step,**

**engulfed in a splintering ecstasy while longing -**
**this beat, this beat - folding over, under and**
**everywhere, mastering the dance,**

**where my identity is just like a child with a toy,**
**there to enact a deed of great imagination.**

# Healed

**Bone and sleeve, blessed**
**a thousand times over -**
**first it enters through the back, a wave**
**of rare wind flooding the pores, then through the front,**
**a deeper rush that separates the skin**
**like rock into sand, making granules, softness**
**to cup loosely in hands.**

**You never viewed me dressed in my own hues. You tried**
**with your guilt and pity, clinging to the ruthless rules**
**of worldly absolutisms, rules void of miracles,**
**void of the greatness of God. It is not your fault.**

**You were born in a poverty den, surrounded**
**by uproar and mouths of many hungering siblings.**
**Violence and servitude, and so many trapped ghosts**
**filling the stairways, settling**
**in the corridors, peering through paintings. A home**
**where spirits latched on to doorknobs, the nails in floorboards,**
**bred like bugs under pillows, in closed-door closets.**
**I cannot blame you, later**
**you earned and kept your independence,**
**but still the one thing remained your master**
**like a severe hand coming down, dominating,**
**throwing cutlery across the room, thrashing**
**your childlike joy to pieces.**

**My lungs can't function in that haunted landscape.**
**I am rising new born, rising with no sense of**
**separation. I move beyond my temporal bloodlines.**
**I will not own your wounds as truth. Even still, I love you.**
**I bless the bell. I bless how far we both have come – new homes,**

**clean of bad breath and the tormented**
**tightening-grip of others.**

**Miracles are fish that somehow know**
**their way through the oceans.**
**Miracles are stones, glorious as stars,**

**or a rat in winter guided**
**to a dumpster feast.**

# Make a Bridge

**Make a bridge,**
**follow its framework,**
**fall fall**
**off that bridge into**
**an ice-cold pond**
**where the underbelly is**
**readying for hibernation.**

**Be cold under that bridge,**
**remember who you are -**
**the maker and the one who fell.**

**It is good to paint**
**delirium and devotion**
**as one and the same.**
**It is good to arrive secret in your niche, never**
**letting anyone know you are there,**
**if you want to stay and not be up-seated.**

**Make a monster**
**to keep in your pocket**
**that you can caress or make squeal at will.**
**No one will hold you accountable as long**
**as it remains unspoken of, vaguely secret.**
**No one will ask you to make**
**another bridge – one will be enough.**

**In time, falling and freezing**
**miles below the surface**
**will be the milestone, the lasting legacy.**

# Acceptance as Recovery (the blinds are drawn)

**The light wind,**
**the heavy wind**
**belongs beyond the flesh**
**and gravity's consent.**
**We are stopped at the threshold -**
**a pomegranate in the water, floating,**
**soon to be devoured.**

**When the child grew up,**
**apparitions of abandonment remained,**
**blistering the eyes now and then with salt.**
**Hot fear, unease in the gap between**
**the mind and doing.**
**What is this? A waterfall to stand under,**
**to try to master the onrushing force, and climb?**

**I think you never belonged here**
**that is why you don't eat or own your own skin like origin.**
**I think you were a jellyfish on another world,**
**a fluorescent swimmer without a skeleton,**
**barely feeling the torrent ebb and flow around you.**
**I think you glow like something brighter**
**in an already bright sky,**
**You reject the stone, anything that burns**
**permanently into your flesh,**
**demanding you to be human.**

**You came a long way and went a long way to the other side.**
**You are one-of-a-kind, a creation who is always**
**in the process of equally praising and escaping.**
**You gather your light like gunpowder.**

**It is hard maneuvering on this primitive plane**
**of terrifying unpredictability.**
**It is hard to be so bright, so see-through,**
**and not to be part shielded, and where not shielded,**
**long lines of jagged division,**
**fractured roots and core, damaged.**

# Broken Window

**Flip, flop and pound**
**on the other side of night,**
**like in pre-teen summers,**
**peeling paint off the rafters,**
**hanging around at a nearby park and pool,**
**climbing the old tree to catch a glimpse, an ear-full**
**of your boy-focus and his conversations,**
**moving forward with solvable cares.**

**Days were burning fingertips on ice,**
**tucked in pockets after the fact, when being alone**
**meant you could soar (all senses alert) into the sun,**
**onto a past-life planet, more vibrant than**
**even your infant awakening, here.**
**Flavours slid down rooftops, made their way down**
**brick walls, painting**
**front yard gardens in watercolour tones.**

**I needed you to blow the whistle, remove the veil of the dull**
**horror of living without hope, of swaying back**
**and forth on the high line. I needed your devotion, not**
**your powdered nose appearance, lies of gainful tapestry**
**adventures - cut clean from commitment or attachment.**

**Loyalty, on the dinner plate, in the bathtub, honesty**
**in the eye-to-eye, I needed**
**to trust your words, that what was between us**
**would always be clean.**
**But so it stands, a muddy thick brew up to our throat lines.**

**I stand on stilts on a ship on stillwaters looking**
**all around. Nothing to see but endless sea - dreams**
**liquefied as illusions - love, impossible,**
**because I see, and all I see**
**is that I am alone.**

# Flaw Mended in the System-Sphere

**The ground is a pond**
**widening into a lake.**
**Before and around me,**
**tiny turtles, thriving**
**in the early morning calm.**
**A spinning globe expanding,**
**a blessing that saturates even backwards**
**into the folds of yesteryears' jaundice.**
**Where will it take me? Out of the vice-lock gripping my gut,**
**out of days and decades of useless but obligatory activity,**
**out of the prison cell with thick walls of searing flames**
**and no sink or stream to gather water.**
**I want a life to own loudly on all fronts,**
**a life where every part of every day is glorious, even**
**the hard parts, the grief, the quivering breath of a vision**
**temporarily lost and the sand beds swelling**
**with capsized bodies.**
**Where I could say that is mine, a flavour in my quest**
**for purification, a motion of love and delectable intensity.**

**The land is stretching its fingers, gathering space,**
**claiming territory. I want the rising ripple.**
**I cannot live much longer bonded to the wall,**
**chained at the throat and joints. I cannot keep**
**making up stories of how this is acceptable or anything**
**other than a secret punishment to justify**
**love gathered and love received. I dissolve that belief**
**and nod to the oncoming wave.**

**Drown these brick-wall flames,**
**drown my boots and my gloves, gather me naked**
**into your ride, over this barrier, into a deeper maturity,**
**where I will know fulfillment on all fronts**
**- field, home, city streets -**
**aligned, nourished, in service.**

# Oasis?

**Cold wave, mother blue**
**as the dead and empty sky,**
**orphan sun sitting when**
**pity has passed, love**
**has left too for alliances with**
**the party goers, party-givers**
**and the run-of-the-mill wealthy mongrels**
**of deception and worldly favour.**

**Eyes to the pavement with**
**the strength and perseverance to find and pluck**
**the secret egg hidden among the stones,**
**pluck away shame, guilt and unhealthy obligations,**
**boil them in the boiler room, send**
**them into the crematorium**
**never to again inflict a living hold.**

**Once plucked what is left hurts like a severed attachment -**
**lost from warmth and the glowing light**
**of benevolence.**
**Devastating, this violation of nature,**
**this thrust-alone on the high ridge.**
**Flowers here in pretty colours**
**are confined to gardens, to gravity**
**like the rest of us. I walk away from flowers**
**into a desert where high winds and sand**
**scratch my face, then**
**the corneas of my eyes.**

**Can love be revolutionary here, a miracle here**
**of abundance, soft affection? Can it be priceless,**
**a happy licking tongue, settling**
**for nothing that isn't endlessly overflowing,**
**a waterfall, a child embracing**
**in fearless abandon?**

# The Faintest Breath of Love is Enough to Save Me

**Inside the box the lid**
**was pushed up, lifted, pulling out**
**the weight of darkness, filling**
**the space with air – fresh as a**
**blooming sunflower, gathering the**
**bumble bee and Eastern Grey squirrel.**

**Without warning the stem snapped,**
**an essential survival line severed from its source.**
**The bee and squirrel moved on,**
**as I must move on, clean up dead stems, petals and seeds,**
**rest on the front steps, put the debris in the box and bury it**
**in the same place where**
**the sunflower once stretched half way to the roof.**

**I must be brave without beauty to strengthen me,**
**free of myth and poetic attachments, mingle with**
**the nest-makers, the earth-foragers, satiate in the present**
**and tremble with glory, breathing better in spite of decay,**
**disease and the loss of sustenance.**

**Light the box on fire before I bury it.**
**Bury it while it is burning. Bury it, burning...**
**holy is this, holy is that,**
**dream it now**
**and it will be over, it will be mine.**

# Hard Landing

**A scattering of force**
**lapping up voices from street corners,**
**subway cars, seagull songs, using them as your own.**
**The flowerheads drop, dried in a jar.**

**You abandoned me,**
**once my shell had cracked and**
**my doom became inevitable.**
**You could have offered glue,**
**as there was a tiny tube on hand, in your hand, enough**
**to repair and prevent further damage.**
**But you turned your back, flaunted fake superiority,**
**based upon the good fortune of your stars and privilege.**
**Not the love of unconditional calm,**
**joining with joy and determination my plight with your own.**

**Your darkness reigns silent,**
**no space for whistling or pleading or singing.**
**Wave upon relentless wave caught the fish**
**and shoved it ashore. The tide receded,**
**the skin scales became brittle**
**with the rising light of the sun.**
**Cat paws over lidless eyes, teeth digging**
**deep into fishy fleshy sinews.**

**Broken, it is broken, my body, our bond**
**of guilt, shaming and shame. Love**
**I have felt as a beautiful pressure within**
**– a mother's strength of overcoming, and when**
**unable to overcome, kneeling until the miracle unfolds.**

**Your darkness latches itself to the upside-down illusion,**
**takes its breath and being from inversion, a lie**
**deep as your self-righteousness. Never come here again.**
**I seal my skin. I have this last straw, lack-of-pulse nothingness,**
**phone calls of perpetual chatter,**
**deliberately avoiding the wound and methods of healing.**
**I deserve healing, debts forgiven, a future worth**
**upholding. I will not give up to the titling of the tree, but**
**pitch high, bypass your acts of conditional charity.**

**I love you, but the link that bonded me, broken**
**under your power, bonds me no longer. I love you,**
**and the honey flows, my windows are clean,**
**my heart has evolved, this way, orphaned.**

# Body of the Whale

**Burnt, engraved**
**slipped for weeks walking on**
**a shallow incline. I could not choose**
**my steps or wear anything but out-worn shoes.**
**I could only be this one way and pray**
**I was not being deceived.**

**After many falls and aching ankles,**
**thumb-joints, landing-joints,**
**and my tears in constant flow, I decided not to move,**
**stay as a sunken root, let the mud flood**
**around me, driving me deeper into the stench.**

**Fears like a cord tied to my feet, tugging me down where even undulation ceased and it was cold and simple, without cause or mercy or chance of escape.**

**I am at the bottom, somehow still myself.**
**There are strange translucent reptiles brushing**
**at my extremities. No way to eat and no breath left to be had,**
**under here in this lightless territory, not much different**
**than the depths of space, than the place I was first born.**

**But there, I was one with the darkness, and the stillness of void was tender, womb-like, all I knew. I will find that again here,**

**stop resisting, diffuse, painfully, but with the least amount**
**of rebellion or horror - dissolve like candy floss in a child's**
**mouth until I join the blank weight digestive track,**
**welcome the bottom feeders and the algae pocket swirls**
**as my own flesh, until there is nothing left of me**
**but this indent bed,**

**the space inside this bed that keeps my body. And soon**
**even that will fold over, coalesce, as though it never was.**

**I was a daughter. I am not anymore. I was waiting**
**on a personal love, rescue like a clean wave coming to**
**liquidate my mind. I am not waiting anymore.**
**I have no strength for hope, no heart**
**to withstand the hurt.**
**I break a part and I gather, honouring**
**the end of my pulse and its reign.**

# Cardinal

**We walked beside the wall**
**on a grim February afternoon.**
**Our lips parted wanting to speak,**
**but words grazed the soundwaves like**
**ghosts and our hearts sank.**
**We walked together, over logs of rotted wood,**
**through slush puddles, avoiding snowbanks**
**and icicles dangling from high trees, beside the wall.**

**This is love, you told me, and I knew it to be true.**
**I grew tired and you linked our arms. You grew despondent**
**and I looked into your eyes like looking at a flower.**
**The winds turned on us. Family dug ditches of judgment**
**around us, expecting our downfall.**

**The cardinal arrived, leading the way, navigating**
**us through – stopped on a wire while we rested, called at us**
**to turn a corner. Around that corner, holding hands,**
**the wall disappeared.**

**Our hair damp with snow, our gloves ripped**
**at the fingertips, we sat on a neighbourhood rock, in a yard**
**where nobody was home. The cardinal left when a stranger**
**appeared. You helped me up and we continue on**

**houses all around us, children going to school, and us together**
**inseparable, strong in love, stronger than the hard hard world.**

# Love is our master

**The tone resonated the red heat**
**of a sea of lava burning away the dead cells,**
**activating a living substance. We held**
**hands, walking in the deserted late-December streets.**
**Ours is nobody's but ours - broken train tracks carried,**
**dropped, put back together. The lapping wind of the spirit**
**like a bell in the far distance, calling us here, there**
**and always home.**

**Your pockets are full of roots, ones**
**you chopped from the ground, left there with no tree**
**or shrub to source its life out to. But those roots still thirst,**
**so you place them in a high jar in our bedroom, tend to them,**
**give them the attention of your brilliant mind, hurting**
**for their inadequacies. I love you deep in the hole and in**
**the twilight of an open summoning space or when locked**
**in desire, the two of us, giants without chains - the illusion of**
**isolation shed, heroes to each other's loneliness, and the rising**
**of our blood that has no ancestry, no pastlives**
**or this life before.**

**We are the keepers of this conversation.**
**You are the place where all my ships land,**
**in the infinity of your eyes, a strong arrow spark**
**of awe-striking connection, where**
**underground tunnels are excavated.**
**We are a perfect rub and flow, and we flow, fingers**
**over the tender inner thigh, mouths**
**braving more than kisses. We built a bridge and we crossed it,**
**holding hands, watching each other's back.**
**We take off our shoes, a field is before us.**

**All animals are gorgeous, each with a full and necessary soul.**
**Animals peer out from behind the curtain of high trees**
**lining the field, waiting for us to run. We run**
**and twirl and lay down in laughter, like we once did long ago.**
**We are good just as we are. We are one**
**at the knees and at the core.**
**Hell and the moaning of withheld mercy is far behind us,**
**we have been devoured and we dissolve -**
**our shells and our centers, seasoned, spring-woven,**
**what is ours, what is God's, combined, surrendered.**

# Stream of Dark Nectar

**It does not end today, in the morning, in**
**these sapling hours of blissful solitude.**
**It could end and be a bone, dried and crushed**
**by the pressure of circumstance – but the**
**veil has lifted. Jesus speaks his anarchy**
**and raises the grass strands, blooms the flowers, swiftly,**
**miraculously with perfect sense before my eyes. King**
**of time and gravity – the weather listens to him, the water,**
**coins and food all bend to his majesty and authority.**
**I watch this like I would a landscape sunsetting sky,**
**vast across forever and wide as the sea.**

**Cards are in my hands,**
**they have living pictures, moving in sacred gestures,**
**gathering force, corresponding with bird conversations,**
**rising in crescendo, defending in their equal chaos**
**and innate harmony. One tree opens its branches.**
**One child remains.**

**This morning I see upright, shed**
**what was never mine to own.**
**Jesus is near like the beauty of eternity, sitting**
**across from me, touching my knees then holding my hands.**
**Power that is peaceful and velvety soft as it is**
**a black hole of mystery, infinity contained.**
**This morning God is strongest,**
**cutting the threads of mortal memories, leaving**
**only the imperishable wind.**

# Bountiful

**The vanishing sequence,**
**removed like a ghost from**
**the body whole, now whole**
**and no longer leaking out**
**toxic bile of directed hatred**
**or the spirit-force leaking,**
**weakening the core, extending**
**to the appendages. Contained,**
**aura sealed as it was in the beginning even before**
**this body, this birth, dreaming in temporal form.**

**There are no enemies and no significance in battle zones**
**or winners – it is just a shedding of skin, dead cells**
**turning into dust, whisked away by a sweep and a soft blow,**
**a light breeze from a window open, opened,**
**all parts collected into a singularity. Faith in**
**the sidewalk turn, in the emptying.**

**The conquering darkness is placed in a storybook,**
**a tale of long ago that holds to personal sorrow –**
**raw chafing bonds of bitterness and regret.**
**Fears become detached, become a horse**
**in an open field, unclipped from his halter and lead.**

**It is stronger than charity because**
**there is no giving, no division**
**between what is given, what exists and what is received.**

**It is a dried curled leaf, opened -**
**the colour cracks and crumbles, its flesh like confetti,**
**gazed at in awe, dropped and lost, vanishing in luscious folds,**
**beneath high grassy ground.**

# Commitment

**Take the end of the root and**
**squeeze. Air is not wind or**
**a wave. Gazing into the darkest of eyes,**
**needs forgotten in the tale**
**of becoming something more than shape,**
**someone more than someone who rocks**
**in despair or madness.**

**I held you with my**
**mind and in my arms, held you broken and stoic**
**as all dangerous dreams. I was afraid to tell you**
**but I told you anyway and the song grew into a sunset.**

**Eaten by gravity, blurring in potency as it traveled**
**past the horizon. I saw**
**you were the willow tree, the pine tree and the birch**
**that scattered leaves and seeds throughout**
**the large acreage yard.**
**I was a raccoon, a beetle bug and a tiny bird.**
**I moved through you, across you,**
**made my home inside of you. Can you see**
**how much of what was mine depended on yours?**
**When the yard caught on fire,**
**the fire seeped into my joints, extending into my aura**
**and all your seeds around me of brown and green.**

**Not a single day when I did not fight**
**to keep your will and commands,**
**not a day without struggle to keep afloat,**
**keep at bay the urge to sink**
**or draw the ravenous sharks near and nearer until**

**they touched - fin against my flesh and then something sharper.**

**You love me you say, but it is a love**
**I cannot understand. I know it is a love, colossal, ruthless**
**in its perfection but it hurts like withholding, hurts**
**as I try to adore you and be absolved by a mutual tenderness.**
**You are final and in this I have no say.**
**I love you, but we are not**
**dancing. I trust you, but we are not**
**sharing with ease. I am left aching, in sharp**
**icicle-tip-pounding-lack, struggling**
**to make sense and find "the law"**
**if there is no mercy to be seen.**

**I should be lucky to know you even as I do, as most**
**walk the Earth without discovering a trace of your existence.**
**But is there something new for us?**
**Is there a bouquet around the corner?**
**A line we can cross and keep**
**on the other side? I give you my wings, my prints**
**and all of my sacred stones. Take me**
**into your softness or leave me here**
**on these barren sharp ridges. Between us,**
**there are no secrets, even my children**
**are freely yours.**

# Hooked

**Lips pulsing, forehead**
**enduring – pound, pound**
**in the nightmare night –**
**high winds, blazing storm**
**and thinking "all alone!"**
**Centre of a circle, surrounded by loved ones**
**who have turned their backs –**
**poverty shame, fed-up with helping.**
**And there it is, the rabbit screaming**
**in a leg-hold trap, compressed, bones snapped.**
**There is this place of Earth called home, survival**
**and self-preservation paramount. Nearing now**
**the rotted root, my hands are slashed,**
**fingers twisted "Do not land!" the voice says,**
**pulsing as I sleep, denying all pleas for mercy.**

**My father would have saved me, but he is dead,**
**died long ago, too young of too big and too broken**
**a heart. My father would have helped me with love**
**in his eyes, growing old would not have blocked his kindness.**

**The streets all go south to the lake and drown**
**in freezing polluted waters. I go south with them,**
**passing beach houses, cafes I once sat at.**
**I am done here, let me be done, I can**
**not carry this inheritance.**
**I cannot lift my foot another step.**
**I have one true-heart companion and we have**
**been shunned together – our home, our children**
**taken from us to feed the snapping jaw.**

**Dreams made of thin glass, roses plucked to the core.**
**Take me like a log and feed me to the campfire, let me turn to ash so I can start again.**

# Illusion is our imagined separation from God

**Bend down and savour**
**the shallow water,**
**stroking out praise like**
**the wind strokes the skin on a gentle day.**

**I was in the pit,**
**closed across the journey,**
**forming lines, lining up eagle eggs, pine cones**
**and leashes. Breaking though**
**irregular dreams that break the edges**
**and expand in an un-uniformed spill.**
**My love was lost when I footed the bridge.**
**My love fell over the rail like a stone.**
**Its sinking was mandatory as only heavy things can**
**make a storm or hiding places for surface-crawlers.**
**My love was my body - left side wracked with aching joints,**
**stealing the sunlight air, sleep and my swift directed walk.**
**Goodbye old love that trembled in**
**survival's ruthless prison pit, fed on dread and fireants -**
**skin stretched like a belly that bore countless stillborn babies.**
**Without choice in the pit, calling a block-square-of-sky heaven**
**and the starlings that would occasionally stop**
**to land and peer below.**
**All that love is gone, old, though because**
**once worthy and living, it is honored for its gifts.**
**The ground rises beneath me, the pit shortens**
**into a short-climb out. My limbs awaken and harness**
**the edges where direct light pours in.**

**The first thing to go will be my heritage,**
**from this life and lifetimes before –**

**bonds of steely anger, irredeemable deficiencies,**
**those bonds like throat chains that became like laws**
**that I pulled at, tried to cut or at least fray, now**
**I blow them away like down-fluff feathers.**
**How soft they have become,**
**their hardness swelled like shells breached**
**to reveal tender interiors.**
**I swallowed, and they are gone.**

**Love, I am learning a freer way of your expression,**
**entering a top layer, climbing.**
**I am almost out, on a flat plane, almost**
**I can see the treeline, the fullness**
**of a full skyline of sunrise on one side and sunset on the other,**
**surrounding plane in a circular scope.**

**I see dimensions pierced and I know**
**it has always been this way,**
**no pit, not ever, only this love,**
**now shed of illusion, away from its hell.**
**I can speak again, sing again, bathe upstream.**

# Fuller Octave Frequency

**Quick, the altered parable,**
**which once was wise words, has become**
**a chapel to rest in, to find a fire whistling**
**and dust crevices full of infant images**
**just starting to talk.**

**Quick, death is dying, the division**
**between houses has dissolved.**
**Mother is a shell, busted.**
**Mother is morning crashing against a bell –**
**chime and resound – the streets are tempered**
**with your protection. Quick, the graves**
**have turned into sundisks, have turned again**
**into a vastness that is infinity that is personal**
**and kisses my forehead first, then my lips, and then**
**knows how to purge me of my sleep.**

**Quick, my bones are sucked of their water,**
**my wealth is in my organs, pouring off my skin**
**like flakes of glitter. Blow the hair from**
**my eyes, see me for who I am – daughter of the egg**
**and animal speaker. The weight inside of me is sheared.**

**I will not carry that crude responsibility anymore. Quick,**
**see me off this cloud plateau, bring me down so I can dig**
**with both hands into earth, my head raised, listening**
**to the squirrels laugh, experiencing the joy of a sunny day**
**as they twirl around a tree, three dizzy with exuberance.**

**I topple over, and I am made.**
**You are pressed against my back and I am holding**
**your hand. Quick**

**take my hayride, my daily routines,**
**dunk me in your ocean, hearing**
**the lyrics that arrive in a melody of pluming intimacy.**
**Walking close to the sidewalk curb – death is nothing.**
**You are showing me this – death is temporary, love**
**is the eternal bloodflow. We are all**
**(even the stones even the weeds)**
**whispering, combined.**

## Rodents and Wings

**Days of holding up the second wall,**
**sustaining with syringe feedings and lifting**
**the broken Venetian blinds.**
**Days of extremes, straining to stay afloat**
**in a flood of despair and then given a**
**miracle season of joy until misfortune overtook again.**

**You told me to walk, and I did. You told me**
**in order to heal the wound, I must first see the wound.**
**You told to keep the water moving,**
**make waves with my hands and never stop**
**stroking the surface.**
**I loved without complaint- washed tiny toes in the sink,**
**kissed a forehead, made medicine in the kitchen.**
**My efforts worked, for a while**
**until they stopped working and death had its claim.**

**At the exact moment of death as I watched a body**
**struggle to sustain breath then stop struggling,**
**you gave me sight to see a spirit rising,**
**speaking of thanks and love and vows,**
**showed me the ropes of attachment, strings of light**
**that need release before a soul can give way to illumination,**
**dissolve intact, no vigor or sorrow, but merging with the whole,**
**into the light that is blackness, that is not void**
**but the absorption of all colour, holy.**

**You showed me and still I grew angry and embittered,**
**at a loss for comfort, destroyed of trust.**
**Two days I lingered enveloped in this terrible flame,**
**weeping, separated from the dance. On the third day,**
**you came again, pointing out**

**a passage of perfect meaning, allowing the sun**
**to glow and others to be stronger than me.**

**Crystal patterns converging. A crack muted,**
**a rift mended and filled, memories**
**and the harshness of a permanent end.**
**Two islands to surrender to,**
**two secrets painted on the beach,**
**on the backyard shed, in the inside,**
**giving in fully to emptiness overtaking,**
**as the calm begins to carve out a niche**
**where it can revive, return pure, all parts**
**tethered faithfully to the wind.**

## No ecstasy without surrender

**There is only one way forward,**
**to surrender into the tar-pit,**
**the O-no! void-pit, stop resisting**
**God's will, start proclaiming light in uncertainty,**
**in personal dreams defeated where that defeat**
**gnaws, builds, insurmountable.**
**Lifting the stubborn rusted lock of what-must-be**
**to allow what will-be, is meant for me**
**to own and witness.**

**If death must arrive**
**then let it be guided and enveloped in**
**tenderness, without tortuous sorrow,**
**give me the strength to receive it,**
**relax into its force, welcoming**
**with trust and even anticipation.**

**Then maybe gratitude will balloon out, covering wide**
**in unexamined corners, peace will come in places**
**where dread claimed victory, an infant's peace,**
**an in-the-now glow glory to bask in, released of exception,**
**uncovering flawless layers- some dwindling, some expanding -**
**layers like laments spoken, when spoke**
**removed like scar-marks from the skin,**

**pausing to hear flute whistles, pausing to rejoice**
**in the broken down alignment with karmic bonds -**
**diffused like fragrances dispersing, going, cleared.**

# It is a strange dream

**to be a woman, this woman,**
**ripped out of an other-worldly childhood**
**into monthly nightmare extremes, and**
**the mess - the demanding insects crawling**
**under coat sleeves, pant cuffs, arm cuffs**
**onto belly and breasts, swollen, aching.**

**To grow curves and be looked at but not seen:**
**to be told to smile.**

**Then to bear the weight of another living being**
**cuckooing, blooming inside - shifting joints, altering**
**established gaits, and the hunger.**

**Being with those you bore and birthed**
**in every stair climbed, in every sleep, each minute,**
**never without their beings not beside yours, living**
**the greatest of all imaginings –**
**heaven in a hug, tangible in eyes**
**that are not yours but are threaded tightly to your nerves,**
**riveting through you - their breaths**
**more significant to your survival than your own, riveting**
**like fireworks and famine,**
**in their sorrow and brightness.**

**Almost grown, then grown and swinging from**
**bell-towers without safety nets, changing houses,**
**destroying rooms, forgetting, sometimes remembering, God.**
**The love, resonating into cracks in plaster, deeper**
**than the sound of a million singing bowls, singing, salting**
**your howl, and the chant of your joy.**

**They are mostly good, and you learn the lesson hard**
**that the greatest gift you can give them is knowing when**
**to hold on and when to let go, and you must let go.**

**The day comes near fifty when your body**
**begins its final chapter –**
**starts slow, builds unacceptable,**
**steals sleep, sanity, your strong and capable shoulders.**
**No one knows, has to know, but you**
**refuse to keep it secret, refuse**
**the nagging misogynistic whispering shame.**

**Your home is blessed, your husband and you,**
**still mad, making love, in love, vibrating true to your visions,**
**a home haloed in struggle and uncompromised ideals.**
**You meditate, make a routine and stick to it, as this**
**transformation**

**lasts for years. Sweaters on, sweaters off, heat**
**first on the face then infiltrating your spine, down, down,**
**spreading like hot poison, flooding every pore.**
**When it has gone far beyond the tolerable threshold,**
**then it lets up,**
**only to return and begin again.**

**What a strange dream I have never dreamt before –**
**to receive the climb, lie down with babes, nurse other beings**
**into their own, to release the cycle, enduring**
**the havoc of becoming yet anew.**

**I should not cry but be praising, grateful**
**to finally spin a journey in this form.**
**It is a high road, can be**
**a life-long sermon, and such a strange dream,**

**weaving me a pair of wings to flaunt, maybe**
**never flight-bound but always love-bound and**
**rich, rich as death, a backdrop**
**to the pale but pounding pulse of dreams,**
**the nut-meat, nectar**
**of eternal pilgrimage.**

# If it is what you want . . .

**Bleed out**
**in the dirt and dung of relationship,**
**leap like a lemming off the cliff**
**soothe your cracked hands in olive oil,**
**then take another's hands and allow them**
**to join you in this private matter.**
**It is in this truth, ourselves with another, that**
**we test the mettle of our discoveries, the cleanliness**
**of the mansions we live in.**

**I see stillness in the saga, retreat**
**when necessary and triumphant vows**
**in spite of chaos and the blood-drenched ground.**
**I will never be fully born,**
**whole enough to join the stars in their whistling.**
**Each time it will be a sunflower plucked,**
**and the bee along with it,**
**each time torn awake –**
**on the threshold of death, only to master**
**the small stream before it widens into a river.**

**Each time,**
**love is a miracle - the movement forward, past**
**jagged huge stones, decaying corpses.**
**Let your bare feet make contact, even lie flat,**
**naked, face down, take in**
**the sharp edges, the smell, the sight, then**
**answer back by rising and walking and**
**acknowledging the sky.**

**Say, love, my love,**
**you are more than habit,**
**you are the most treasured thing ever pulled from the void,**
**the only summer worth remembering, a seed**
**that turned into a thousand-year-old tree and yet still**
**just a seed, easily crushed, demanding nutrients and care.**

**Clear cutting, mud-thrashing,**
**faint smiles that unfold a cityscape of fears.**
**Barely making it, sure of decline, then suddenly, soaring –**
**one nod, the same need, mutual reviving genesis.**
**It is soft sometimes, but mostly impossible,**
**always impossible, alone.**

**Make up your mind.**
**Make a shell and break it completely.**
**Pick an apple, and chew.**

# *A Great Wind Came Rushing*

# Foothold

**I think midnight**
**is a future swelling**
**ready for wreckage**
**then prayer, then sun**
**I think the animals**
**have voices,**
**many, too motionless to hear**
**A backbone, crushed**
**a starfish, exploding**
**good emotion squandered**
**out of fear of failure –**
**all of this exist**
**in union with the empty eve**

**Old people understand**
**the brave business of life**
**some, they have conquered competition**
**cold, ceasing to cry**
**some, they feel like fugitives**
**nearing the boundaries of death**
**shaking like a season**
**that has lost its beginning**
**a harvest**
**ill, unused**

**I dream of footholds**
**I dream deliberate**
**draining meaning**
**out of every moment**
**I dream of souls patterned**
**like constellations**

**In the snow**
**a flame was born**
**Darkness is pointless**
**lacking the owl's eyes**

**I used to house the harrowing hooligans**
**This way, I have restored my temple**
**burying my body below sand,**
**joining the desert**
**devoted.**

# Joshua's Shoulder

**The herd was on a hill**
**Soldiers were marching**
**Young people were below, learning**
**how to grow up correctly.**
**I touch a cloud with my tongue,**
**cried on Joshua's shoulder**
**Will they every be resurrected?**
**Will the horn blow,**
**beat heaven into every heart?**
**I had a dream Joshua,**
**we were on a clear river**
**sailing on a gigantic leaf**
**we were more than happy**
**never once striving for shore.**
**Joshua stretched out an arm**
**a finger**
**drew a circle encasing us**
**My love,**
**I would break in a minute**
**if not for your soul**
**pressed so close to mine**
**Choose your smiles well**
**not everyone understands laughter**
**like we do.**
**The rocks dislodged from mountains**
**covering graveyards.**
**An old woman was reciting her name**
**in front of a mirror, a child**
**she once knew, remembered**
**herself to be**

**Dead fish lay on the beach,**
**their eyes, like marbles**
**glowed, all suffering**
**traceless**
**as if locked inside**
**a wisdom**
**no human could unmask.**
**I lifted my hands**
**to give thanks to the birds,**
**leaned on Joshua's shoulder**
**and whispered**
**Joshua**
**The flowers are stones**
**and the stones are stars**
**Joshua nodded**
**took my hand**
**and changed direction, tears**
**leaving his strong eyes.**

## Selina

**What were you seeking**
**as you walked**
**year past year**
**through the talking crowd?**

**When he'd ask**
**of the cold terror**
**that would sweep through your heart**
**moving like freezing rain**
**towards his eyes**
**all you could remember**
**was summer**
**a week of silence in the heat**
**when you endured his visits**
**like a weight**
**you longed to unleash.**

**Beggars battled their hunger**
**near your home**
**you could smell the decay**
**reeking of bad alcohol**
**and heavy insanity**

**He would climb**
**like an old man**
**onto your body**
**inject his virility**
**fade into a dreamless snore**

**and you would listen to that awkward rhythm**
**thinking of your mother**
**childhood**
**waves never reaching shore.**

**All fled from your fire**
**sleep was short**
**waking was difficult**
**occasionally a star**
**would shake inside of you**
**spread its silver shoots**
**and separate the surrounding night.**

**You must have known from the beginning**
**how meagre his love could be**
**You must have tried hard**
**to inherit some joy**
**from the faces**
**you kept etched on your windowsill**

**Out of all of them,**
**his was the thinnest**
**but still some gesture of affection**
**fated to overpower you**
**when he held out his boorish hand**
**waiting to be love.**

**In the lonely air of age**
**grief watched on**
**as you laughed**
**fast and forceful**
**concealing the wound**
**behind charm and habit.**

**Selina, you died**
**like a country woman**
**barred by the pine trees**
**Selina, you wore clothes**
**scented with velvet flowers**
**and spring after a storm . . .**

**pretending the dance went on**
**despite your exhaustion.**

# The Jester and the Monk

**The jester and the monk went walking**
**The winter moon**
**hung like a skull above their heads**
**Two before midnight**
**prayed by the river**
**laughed in the apple orchards**
**holding hands**
**they circled a forest of dreams**

**The jester poked a tongue at the sky**
**the monk dripped tears on the earth**
**nailed to absurdity**
**locked in serious sainthood**
**campfire burned**
**children linked arms**
**close to their love**

**If not for the living thirst**
**If not for the agonized fascination**
**and the ignited chill**
**no blue bird would they have betrayed**
**no house would they have entered**
**like wings**
**flapping in an undecided wind.**

**A thousand hours**
**counting many dawns,**
**nights of humour and holiness**

**Anyone could feel the connection**
**resting in their smiles**

**Anyone would have swam an Artic sea**
**to soothe the burn**
**blistering the strength of their hold.**

**What they wanted**
**neither dared to understand**
**only a bridge**
**mouthfuls of truth**
**handfuls of lies**
**drove them together**
**inseparable.**

# Walls

**I prefer the window**
**gardens made of stone**
**a sleep-filled afternoon**
**where the whole of a frozen pond**
**is cupped in my palm.**
**When I was younger**
**I skipped stones on the river**
**lived, lurked**
**dazed, dazzled**
**with an honest imagination**
**and cool peace**
**Now, my socks are filthy**
**lovers have belittled intimacy**
**and the sun is sullen**
**painted as a shadow.**

**The planet is yawning**
**over worn with rot**
**moral inconsistencies**
**litter the sidewalks**
**nobody wears**
**the wind on the backs**
**anymore**

**Walls are mine**
**to devour**
**spit up**
**then build again.**

# Immortal Burn

**The evening falls**
**I crawl on my belly through sewers**
**old passions, fatal hopes**
**bellow, discharge**
**into my mind**

**Your smile is like a sickness**
**I can't shake off**
**Your body**
**a beating obsession**
**infesting my pores**

**The last hour**
**the last kiss**
**burns immortal**
**like thunderstorm**
**fastened to my existence.**

# Lost Your Clown

**An applauding audience**
**rat dung on the carpet**
**yes, remember**
**the perfumed summer**
**cold pennies**
**we would lay on the railroad tracks**
**and my necklace**
**with one jewelled eye**
**your clothing of cinnamon colour**
**mornings of breathing**
**with the lights left on**
**surviving the shrilling gull's song**
**breathing**
**wax, humidity, hand-prints on the wall.**
**From you a hot glow**
**swelled in your snare**
**tiny tedious nights**
**in your asylum of approvals**
**and secret judgements**
**I would squirm**
**dry**
**thirsty**
**when you'd come home**
**pockets full of food and false friendship**
**I would rock and weep**
**near the tape recorder**
**stabbing sorrow**
**in my isolated aquarium**
**tossing pebbles to the ceiling**
**watch them hit**
**and laugh out loud**

**I want you to know**
**your theatre is bare**
**nobody lingers for you**
**gifted pretender**
**of deliverance.**

**Take flight**
**take your guru condescending cold**
**it's getting easier to be alive.**

# A Great Wind Came Rushing

**A great wind came rushing**
**and I said to the wind**
**“Bitter wind, stop before you carry me off.”**
**A great wind came rushing**
**and pulled me into the sky,**
**I travelled past wheat-fields**
**sailed under its furious reign.**
**I was broken into many pieces,**
**hit what the wind could not pass through**
**half-crazed with resistance**
**I fell to the ground**
**into worm-holes and the open mouths of laughing children.**
**I sunk into soil and dreamt of sprouting.**
**And the wind said to me,**
**“Do not perish with fright in these strange places,**
**close your eyes and wait for spring.”**

**Spring came,**
**I cracked and grew flesh**
**then like a vine I crawled out of that dark ground**
**and found the sun**
**soothed by heat and rain**
**I praised the earth with untainted joy**
**And I said to the earth,**
**“Sweet earth, allow me to walk.”**

**Gradually my limbs found movement**
**lips formed, eyes appeared, blue and wide**
**and I ran from land to land**
**celebrating life with each step.**

**I wore no clothes, carried no yard stick**
**found equal peace, equal rapture**
**with every new encounter.**

**A great wind came rushing**
**and I said to the wind**
**“Powerful wind, come carry me off**
**for I am still young and can bear the storm.”**
**Weightless with excitement**
**I joined its intense ride**
**gathered at the centre**
**halfdead with stillness**
**I gave myself up**
**lost the beating of my pulse, lost momentum**
**sunk low into my depths, immune to singing**
**And the voice said to me**
**“Do not despair with sorrow in this vacant hollow,**
**open your eyes and wait for love.”**

**Love came,**
**I expanded and felt communion**
**Like a clam I crept out of my isolation**
**and shone my pearl**

**Like a clam I closed back my shell**
**and hid in the safety of darkness.**

**And I said to my love,**
**“I am as incapable of loving as much as**
**everyone else is.” And my lover said back to me,**
**“So am I.”**

**A great wind came rushing**
**And I said to the wind,**
**“Great wind, be still**
**It is time now to learn.**
**The great wind ceased.**

**My love and I walk hand in hand**
**on an unknown mission, swept away,**
**carried by each other, alone.**

# Into the Fire

**My egg**
**sticks to my womb**
**wanting something**
**like a thunderbolt**

**My love**
**makes havoc in my breast**
**like a sinister struggle.**
**I am expecting him**
**his lost satisfaction**
**stretched out to annihilate my own**

**I am expecting him like**
**a flickering tongue, a goodnight kiss**
**in the twisted cry of his need,**
**folding up inside of me**
**expecting**
**a terrible after effect**

**My love hovers in a madman's purgatory,**
**where eternity gets stuck in a single moment,**
**no claimed victory, no wingspread**
**to express his freedom**

**I continue in silence**
**expecting him…**

**I will never sleep again.**

# Devotion

**What links**
**and where?**

**Was I always flushing with need**
**there are your feet**
**with a terrible tenderness**
**or tenderness unborn?**

**I have watched you walk**
**certain you will never run,**
**mystified by your suffering.**
**Was there ever a miracle great enough to touch you?**

**The world is madness, unsafe,**
**and you are captive to that tragedy**
**trying for an impossible life**

**I have imagined brighter days**
**I have imagined to be eternally in love**
**enslaved by nothing**
**delivered from everything**

**I have imagined a life unabstract.**

**More than flesh,**
**but never more.**

# Colour of Earth

**Should I be**
**an aqueduct of faith**
**flowing and falling**
**onto the paralyzed streets?**
**I know flowers**
**are infinite. I know the way is**
**risk. But I cannot climb**
**that blistered mountain**
**or hope for a gentle wind to save.**
**My mirror-ghost rises whole**
**with tangible flesh, too visible to bear.**
**And clouds obsess me.**

**Green forever. Green is**
**the ego waning and love**
**that grows in wild orchards.**
**Red is our age and our wait**
**for greatness inside the owl call.**
**Turn here, turn there – kill**
**the wheel and the virgin flight.**

**So much unanswered. So much**
**we must inevitably lose.**

# Swan's Neck

**The afternoon is here. You are lost,**
**limited, sick with inadequacies**
**and innumerable attempts**
**to forget the unknown.**

**The wolf that communed with your bones,**
**did you place the swan's neck**
**next to his teeth? You did.**
**You were scared but in love**
**with red blood on white feathers.**
**You wish you had the courage to forgive**
**yourself - days, weeks**
**on the edge of a sinister conspiracy darkness.**

**You are the last of my history.**
**I can't go on in this vacuum**
**of thorny hedges, trying to kill boredom**
**with these grandiose unsubstantial schemes.**
**I think you are lonely.**

**I do miss you, sometimes**
**I would like to have your wax figure in my hands,**
**hold it over a candle, to see how fast heat can melt**
**your virgin body.**

**Everything is hard. Hard hats, hard watches –**
**everything, even your striking eyes.**
**And the Italian couple who gave us cookies,**
**the are hard and hurting**
**for revenge**
**And it's no good,**
**it is just damn awful**

**to carry this sea full of creatures**
**in my stomach**
**to hurt like a worm**
**in the mid-day sun**
**attempting to mend this insanity**
**backhoe digging trenches**
**into my karma.**

**Please let me in on the secret,**
**can our gypsy dream really be over?**

**I want to throw the arsenic in the garbage.**
**I want to triumph.**

# Lost in a Garden

**Subjugated, they seduced your ego,**
**abducted your history**
**until nothing remained but a gap,**
**a secret left too long untold.**
**You have a face, a bed to lay**
**your death mask and examine**
**the tears that slip**
**from that counterfeit depth.**
**Morning is vivid, it attacks you**
**with its beauty, but you are stitched**
**together by pale craftsmen who know their trade**
**is narrow.**

**If only the years would end with a final blow,**
**then you could rid yourself of**
**that blunt nameless ache,**
**too rare to resurrect**
**into symbolic meaning.**
**On the back of the moon,**
**you let the vision go**
**for a prize that had no gain.**
**They came to you with soft sighs that belittled freedom.**
**You believed: A fool**
**who knew the souls of each and every star**
**then stooped to touch the Earth**
**in all its pointless fury.**
**All is private. Your confessional**
**hands will disappear.**
**They need you now to smile**
**in spite of your personal storm.**
**Do not despair. Heal.**
**You know whose side you're on.**

# The Tongue

**Through the back door**
**he took the baseball bat**
**and hammered the rattlesnake to death.**
**Feasting on decadence, he escaped the burning sunrise**
**and ate the last petal of the last rose.**
**No one could persuade him of unity,**
**not even her with her undulating promises of love.**
**He was saddled in the seat of pride,**
**turning eastward to raise a glass**
**to Armageddon.**
**She broke his removed look**
**with a touch of her tongue to his lips.**
**She tuned her hair to flames, and called out to follow.**
**As he lifted his hand to touch her skin,**
**she took him in a dream to a land where**
**people wandered intoxicated with sorrow,**
**on account of their ill-formed hearts,**
**where children were weary,**
**baptized by the grotesque art**
**of selfishness.**
**He called – adultery.**
**She called back - It is your accomplishment.**
**He watched her tongue turn to water then**
**drip on the grass, tuning the whole scene**
**into stone.**
**We must go she said. She said,**
**there is no belonging,**
**only intimacy achieved, fought for.**
**Without protest, he curled into her arms**
**hiding in peace, safe beneath her golden sails.**

# Paper Man

**Those were the distances,**
**the attachment of your soul to mine,**
**where we slept in the windy valley**
**with that imbecile comedian**
**who would play the flute**
**and try to emulate your profound nature.**

**The day you opened the door and I walked in,**
**stared at your multi-coloured paintings,**
**grateful to eat your wonderous gifts,**
**I needed you like a bandage. I needed**
**my cigarettes, the nights outside in alleyways**
**fantasying formidable adventures**
**to express our courage.**

**Thank you for your arms**
**that veiled me from the eclipse**
**and the strangers you brought to my side**
**with God brewing strong in their stomachs**

**I never did get my housecoat**
**or the dance in the traffic I so wanted.**
**They tell me you are going far,**
**to great planets that have no names.**

**On my bare belly,**
**our hands once joined.**

**You are on stage, singing,**
**drenched in a beautiful darkness.**

**You were my companion, lover**
**in the January frost.**

## When He Rides

**Unearthly dreams**
**illuminate him**
**where gardens**
**lay their petals to rest.**
**They creep now, his eyes,**
**into sad and forbidden**
**realms**
**of insanity's broken weight.**

**Loose threads**
**dangling from his mind.**
**Loose thoughts**
**that have no ending.**
**Lost on his lips, something**
**unleashed like music, something**
**like my love.**

> **Find me alone**
> **inside bedroom walls,**
> **take these useless hands,**
> **allow them to touch**
> **the impossible**

**He makes the bell ring**
**He turns the lights off**
**He takes the bareback horse**
**and gallops**
**into the cutting dark.**

**The stars, they say,**
**lose all balance**
**when he rides.**

# The Man and The Snake

**Fused, in flight**
**he dove with haste into the sand pit. So little now to feel,**
**but hummingbird fear, crushed pebbles and bitter pride.**
**He danced in the yellowish crevice, swinging**
**religious aging arms;**
**as if invisible like the silent atmosphere**
**of stopped clock hands and snowflakes falling.**
**The cobra cocked its head. Suspended in the shadows,**
**its boneless beauty shone with lust.**
**He touched its tail first, then tongue; rolled**
**like thunder down its fleshy throat,**
**kicking his heels against**
**the interior shell of the snake being.**
**Breathless, he begged for poison,**
**or relief. The snake hissed -**
**Tonight, you return to the womb. Close your eyes**
**your sanctuary is complete.**
**His eyelids folded over like petals in a frost.**
**He kissed the dream, then followed his fate**
**home.**

## Sister

**With your random intimacy, you gather**
**like a fresh season**
**in my unchanging days.**
**The letters I write you**
**turn blue with sorrow, yellow**
**with self-lies.**
**I am a woman**
**bearing this seed of false explanations.**
**Am I meagre? Have I calculated**
**truth and love, inch by inch**
**as severable, solitary desires?**
**I am sinning beneath a half-moon, wanting**
**to shape my thighs perfectly,**
**but I have only two hands to mend this wound,**
**and even their double skill and devotion**
**is inefficient for such a task. It is better left**
**to trust, to fate,**
**to an open-hearted ruin.**
**I believe in your perfect happiness,**
**your nunnery in a Montreal duplex, your discipline.**
**I will join you someday, look into your priestly eyes**
**and feel once and for all**
**upright.**
**My mind is whitewashed.**
**Your smile is surfacing**
**like a cleaned glass swan.**
**On the shore or in the sandpit**
**we will arrive,**
**whether it take over night**
**or lifetimes.**

# Kaita

**It is sort of colourless,**
**the Earth. Though**
**I can hear the voice of spring,**
**I cannot help being disappointed at the slow**
**blooming flowers, that grow up**
**pursing the sun**
**to no avail.**
**Then I see the long boneless bodies**
**of angels**
**ascending like arrows**
**into the depths of a starless sky,**
**and I think to myself that he**
**who has gone into**
**shadows, hissing a private song**
**is much better off with his visible scars than**
**their invisible wings.**
**And I wonder, will he come home**
**or pass like water between unwebbed feet, to the ocean**
**where all that is written**
**is washed away with the sand?**

# Nocturnal Souls

**Those pure, breathable love-notes**
**written on Japanese paper.**
**Our house, rain-cold**
**with dawn dying in every corner.**

**When you sleep**
**I believe I am made of ice. I travel**
**in my frozen figure, spiralling,**
**drilling up**
**into God's domain. While you, flat**
**amongst the covers, breathe slow like**
**roots, touchable, sacred**
**as the shadows of my mortality are born**
**then perish in the wind's mute philosophy.**
**Loneliness infects us all. You have told me,**
**there will never be a simpler tomorrow.**

**Cut flowers lean their bloom on pale walls.**
**I drop my mouth like wine dripped**
**on your shoulder.**
**You wake and find me,**
**hauntingly yours.**

## Walk on Fear

**It appears in the grip**
**of ecstasy, in the**
**idiot abstract of failure,**
**and sometimes, love.**

**Illusions coating**
**the sides of eternity**
**with shrieks, illusions**
**crawling out of the mouths of**

**of gods and myths. Trains**
**pass all night through offices,**
**apartments, trains packed**

**tight with a cargo of dreams.**
**No one is strong enough to say goodbye**
**to the world, shave their heads**
**without feeling. No one is here**

**to shout spontaneous, to endure**
**the striving tongue and bone. Electrical**
**flies on the wall. Cockroaches scanning**
**the fridge - oxygen, dancing couples,**

**standing naked**
**before a window, skyscrapers**
**stretched towards**
**a crippled sky, and then**

**long ago, a child**
**sitting in a forest,**
**singing**
**to each tree.**

**Lately, it is has been hard**
**to hide - undressed,**
**divorced from direction.**

**Lately, I've been watching**
**the furniture, screaming**
**aloud when there's a knock**
**on the door.**

**But my house is forever.**
**And the urgency and hunger**
**that overpower my pulse**
**has never cried for peace.**

## Forgive the Night

**Let the heart peel**
**its iron crust.**
**Let the rainbow ribbon of this**
**spiritual dream**
**coil around my neck.**
**I walk the fished-fumed streets,**
**with mask in one hand and thoughts**
**of resurrection in the other,**
**balanced between mercy and reality's**
**ruthless blade.**

**Who will let me in, let me**
**name my thorn, give wing**
**to my smallest vision?**

**Alone, through May's**
**ripened night, through the dusk light above.**
**Grief shifts understanding**
**to a higher octave, anchors it in soft ground.**
**My hood, my sting, alone**
**waiting a certain tomorrow**
**when all will dig like a diamond**
**into my chest, leave no**
**forgiveness unappeased, no love**
**denied a brilliant wave.**

**I long for my enemy's hand**
**to bless it like we all**
**bless the stars. I long to shut**
**out hate caused**
**by hurt, by love incapable.**

**A walk through a cemetery.**
**Death invading an injured bird's**
**eyes. This I can bear.**
**This lockjaw, heavy drum of death.**
**But the dying - harsh struggle, grasping**
**claws, alcoholics in the streets,**
**violent children, worthless anguish…**

**Who will drain this venom from my**
**blood, blow my armour down?**

## Wide In His Chains

**Under the cliff of**
**winter clouds**
**his hands**
**were born,**
**drunk on abstractions and**
**a feeling muse.**
**Battleships soared through his**
**ransacked-mind.**
**Impossible loneliness attacked like**
**a vulture,**
**painting his jealous seasons**
**morphine blue.**
**His was a tender style, loving equally**
**the hideous and the brave.**
**He was punished for his ruthless poetry, exiled**
**for his ecstasy-grip**
**Those hands were tendrils, latching on**
**to what others feared.**
**His music drove on through**
**bombshell screams**
**toward a prophetic morning,**
**desired.**

# On Mortal Ground

**Nothing, take nothing**
**only my starving hopes.**
**Save my brow from the devil's comb,**
**the false religious cry.**

**I am low on the ground**
**watching ants and spiders play.**
**I have been hit**
**by a barnacle onslaught storm.**
**My fingers are strands of straw,**
**beating back in time with the breeze.**
**I am alive, guarded by grief**
**and rib and brain.**
**My house is an egg,**
**a shooting simple firework.**

**Nothing, take nothing**
**the children are my shelter,**
**and their gifts of inspiration -**
**my wound, my blade.**

## But the Waves of Savage Light Kindle Me

**I do not trust**
**your ruse-dance, your guillotine**
**cutting mind.**

**I listen through the backdoor,**
**with both eyes**
**locked on the table.**

**Lies shut beneath**
**your playacting smile.**
**Sweet**

**encouragement with**
**a twist, like towels can**
**twist,**

**and limbs and laughter.**
**Metre by metre your muse is**
**measured,**

**scaled-down**
**to a keyhole**
**muted howl.**

**The streets are bleached monotone**
**by your analytical trumpet**
**pour.**

**The buildings outside**
**turn bloodless blue,**
**sold**

**to your calculated vision.**

# Tearing Roots

**Guilt that shatters**
**the skull of megalomaniacs.**

**Guilt that motivates early morning**
**extremes, pacts and dubious proposals.**

**He was paralyzed in the playground,**
**taking years to say a single**
**no – A childhood**
**filled furies and thieves.**
**A child that carried sharpened pencils**
**in his pockets.**

**A child in bed, in a lucid dream**
**of horrid hands rising from the floor,**
**tugging his dangling foot, pulling**
**his hair and leaching**
**his pores of their juice.**

**Now he rides beyond the blasphemy**
**of his youth, beyond his**
**innocence murdered by a careless**
**tyrant's siege.**

**Out of his husk, his form**
**swims, pursuing a small but majestic**
**harbour**
**glow.**

# The Leap

**His body**
**has fallen**
**onto the pyramid's point.**
**Pyramid**
**of passion's climb, edge of**
**water of sunstroke-sea.**
**Thunder**
**in his bones, contagious,**
**moves through his nails and**
**hairstrands.**
**Has one dedication – to seek**
**and scream. Has no**
**mother**
**no rite of passage to**
**soak him in strength.**
**Thunder**
**of hard fought-for joy.**
**He tosses and turns at**
**the tip,**
**on his heels.**
**He lies flat, feet and arms**
**spread**
**like some great animal,**
**fossilized, once**
**in flight.**

# Hawk

**Paradise bound**
**by doubt's heavy claw.**

**Our promises were**
**fracturing. The hour**
**melted into sleep**
**then confusion.**

**In the bed where our stones**
**were gathered like oracles**
**of deliverance came the touch**
**of communion, your hands**
**crossing my boundary flesh.**

**Splitting the atmosphere,**
**and your eyes, feverish with love's**
**great skill.**

**You circled me,**
**sliding down**
**through the stronghold space**
**between, entered**
**and gave what in tomorrow**
**I may never find.**

# To Mourn the Dusk

**Measure of rain,**
**echoing through his**
**protected slumber.**

**Authenticity locked beneath**
**his belly, amidst swarming**
**bullets of base destruction.**

**Rage grinding, titling his**
**equilibrium, shrinking**
**an ivory sun.**

**People play with him, give response**
**to his repeating voice, won't abort**
**his fatal ebb and flow.**

**He sits with arrows under his seat,**
**trusts nothing but the iron isolation**
**of betrayal.**

**Will not speak to children or enjoy**
**a paint-by-number. Loves only**
**chewed wounds, impossible needs,**

**the drowned swimmer**
**of**
**his mind.**

## Working with Glory

**In the rich thick salt**
**of a sea,**
**gulls gather creating**
**havoc with their stammering wings.**

**A dog brushes my knees.**
**Small pebble shells cover my toes.**

**I walk to the pavement where**
**an insect crawls,**
**seeing purpose there as great**
**as any mountain climber's weight and cause.**

**I follow a madman off the pavement**
**into the bush, hearing the waking**
**of an oncoming downpour.**

**In a raven's beak descending**
**a chant echoes into the open:**

**It brings in rays of maximum heat,**
**sets my name**
**on fire.**

# As Your Sky Opens

**I touch your eyelids**
**not to keep closed**
**nor to help lift,**
**just to understand**
**how such secrets form.**

**The night's creatures**
**rise like needles from the earth,**
**into the trees, into the throbbing river's arms.**

**You have so many days ahead,**
**so many visions unnamed, ready to be spoken.**

**Your tears drop like swallows.**

**Your smile changes the shape of each cloud.**

## Step Through Summer

**Dying for my thoughts to fade**
**into an amnesiac slur, not judge my**
**convalescent love.**
**Waiting for sleep to**
**move to a higher**
**octave, away from guilt, blame and**
**artful blindness.**
**The light that falls forever**
**into the gullies**
**of souls and skulls - comforts**
**but cannot heal. The wind too cannot**
**give like a compass burn.**
**I pace the floors, longing**
**to surrender what I have**
**to the summer flowers,**
**remaining.**

# No Wedding Day

**Held up by the strings**
**and the ragged chains**
**of expectation.**

**This is the**
**last vein to burst,**
**the last root**
**to dry.**

**Keep your milk**
**and music for**
**the moon – mother**
**of dreams, mother**
**of personal metaphor.**

**The marriage ring has taken**
**its final curve.**
**From now on, only**
**a gypsy smile,**
**only a trumpet blow**
**for the wanderer's freedom.**

**Clouds cave over the sun**
**like a fist. Children play on**
**the green-pink hills**
**as all disappointments line up**
**on the wave of their laughter**
**to be killed or**
**pardoned.**

# Missed the Mark

**I felt I could almost run**
**the passage.**

**But the mist and**
**the naked days**
**of winter's burning**
**snows**
**made my head heavy and**
**a purpose too slender to follow.**

**A twisted brightness came crashing**
**through the ghosts surrounding.**

**Nothing but a comforting**
**numb held my feet to the ground.**

**I thought my blood was more**
**than words. I thought to claim**
**my flesh anew.**

**But love shifts like coastal waters**
**and only the drumming tides**
**of error and time**
**can guide me now –**

**away.**

# Feline Dream

**Winter comes like a blank page**
**dropping over the city.**

**Houses glow in**
**T.V. light,**
**dulled and eerier.**

**Somewhere my mind has lost itself,**
**trekking through this burning time.**

**I see the eyes of animals in every place.**
**I see a kestrel cribbed in the sky, beating**
**against clouds and taunting crows.**

**I do not know what I am:**

**I live the nights through like a cat,**
**soothed by poetry**
**and the moon-white**
**fury**
**of solitude**

**under stones.**

## Helen

**She rises from the flower-pot soil,**

**sad as a caged Queen.**

**Her hands, fixed behind,**

**pushing her head towards**

**the moon.**

**Her lips as still as**

**trees after a storm, lying flat**

**and bloodless. She does not**

**let her hair down, or her**

**firm skin flex.**

**She has seen what lies underneath**

**where worms and millipedes crawl.**

**Half of her still there –**

**the other half, awakening**

**struggling up, away from the tar-sand**

**ruins.**

# Birth

**I hear the tumbleweed bounce
and the jewelled breath of the
antelope. Pebbles under my
tongue. His aura is heavenbound.
His mind is breaking up
in his landscape beyond my reach.
I turn to him – his leg stretched
out, tilting clockwise.**

**Where power is shapeless
and some shrilling sorrow
is sealed in fishbowl eyes,
ruling from behind glass worlds -
I see him born, towering between
flesh. His head is a miracle, a
signing bonfire.**

**I turn to him. I run to him.
His belly makes me weep. Pulsing
up and down, warm with life.**

**He is coming out from the
quicksand wound. His beauty,
quenchless. His is innocence is
revived.**

## Nomad and Wife

**Her dying bones**
**which still have the strength**
**of moon and fight are held**
**up on his altar-hut.**
**Watching over – a small**
**figure with the once milking**
**flow of feminine**
**curve and charm.**
**He will not be undone**
**by the pain or**
**winter's fast approach.**
**(He places a carved bird at her feet.)**
**He has killed for her dignity**
**marred and she for the power of his**
**wide-set eyes. They touch**
**hand to weatherworn hand**
**and know the sensation**
**singular like the sun**
**is singular in its power**
**to bless or deprive.**
**They do not smile, their union**
**is too rich for such**
**a soft space between.**
**(They remember their children)**
**Watching as her life departs,**
**his anguish echoes the high plains**
**undefended, heard only**
**by the gods. And the trees**
**so placid, absorb each cry,**
**accepting.**

# You walk

**the branches.**

**You put Sunday in your**
**pocket. Unlike you, I am not**
**destined for immeasurable acts.**

**I speak to the stones, to someone like you,**
**looking up your stairway, into your hallway**
**of a holy place.**

**You move to the rooftop,**
**eyeing the crowd with a distant tear.**

**I would hold my hands out to you but**
**your love is criminal, is metal slowly**
**burning through the streets, congesting**
**the autumn air.**

**Why do you devour me**
**into your sweet, immaculate hell?**

**You circle me and circle my door with your**
**smiles and waves**
**of irresponsible feigned devotion.**

**I am too soft for such deception.**
**I am no rock, no easy rider.**

**Your lies like your beauty**
**live in me, aimlessly**

**cutting.**

# The Way of Separation

**If today I cry for you**
**would you weep**
**with me, though**
**your paradise is found**
**and my life is strange to your eyes?**

**Blue shade in my**
**palm. Midnight in**
**my shoe. I give up**
**hope, give up the covers**
**to shield me from ruin.**

**If you could love me differently,**
**with a love not so dead to deeds,**
**so proud in its moral conviction,**
**would the moon appear different too,**
**and its bone-white light, could I bear it**
**whole?**

**I learn to will my famine numb**
**I learn our intimacy was hollow,**
**nothing is sure but God**
**I learn the way starfish see –**
**slow, slow change, that none**
**but the intent can observe.**

***(Mortal heart***
***that hears the***
***resonating thunder,***
***feels the owl's burning***

***eyes. Modern heart***
***of secret logic, robed***
***in the gales of a coming***
***age.)***

**Do you remember the heat**
**of our stride, our anxious days**
**of youth, christened by our friendship?**

**You go into airy ideals.**
**I break with your walking.**

**You go into arms that praise your every gesture.**
**I look to the river.**

**You ask my forgiveness.**
**I am stronger now, enough**

**to bless *(and I bless)***
**without taking.**

## Ambush Your Rage

**Savour the shock**
**that makes a weak person perish.**
**Savour the shape**
**of abandonment in an old man's eyes,**
**the grit of bitterness that taints the forgotten,**
**the pinpoint range of hurt**
**which lasts beyond**
**all means of distraction or comfort.**
**Savour the fruit of your**
**awareness, its fierce caress and symbolism.**
**Live long along the roadside's edge. Let**
**the ants weave your shroud.**
**Give nothing to the canyons, to the diving**
**bottom-feeders while winter freezes overhead.**
**Give nothing to this minnow town, these**
**streets of helter-skelter code.**
**Let the heron guide the way as you**
**kneel before your destined trials**
**and seize the tide**
**to follow.**

# Anonymous

**The man on the corner curb,**
**knees bandaged and bloodstained,**
**mocks**
**each passer-by**
**with a wink from his drunken**
**eyes.**
**Long hair like seaweed**
**glued around his neck and shoulders.**
**Child**
**of a tortured past, says he sees miracles**
**looking into storefront windows.**
**Lovers**
**ignore him, only children notice,**
**tugging on pant legs with defiance and**
**trepidation.**
**Says he plays cards with leprechauns,**
**has lived through an avalanche which fractured his**
**soul**
**into two. Unravels his bandages and shows**
**his wound: can't remember how it happened.**
**Rain**
**floods his open hands.**
**His mouth, catching drops like**
**diamonds.**

# Treading Water

**I hear hummingbird's wings**
**figure-eight beneath my skin.**
**Too many bitten sandwiches, people**
**walking by, containing**
**their anguish.**
**The wordless hymn**
**is a waterfall, pouring**
**through the smoke: not a dry ocean,**
**but, rejoicing. But this mind**
**is like an axe, slaughtering my joy**
**with world-worn concerns.**

**Who craves the contradictory high? Do I?**
**Do I love for nothing but death and bramble?**

**To be blinded by ecstasy,**
**to hunt again for the colossal Self.**

**I walk through the dust-ridden morn.**
**The wind splits my shell like a labouring woman:**
**It enters. It expels. It knows**
**everything.**

# *The Field is Open*

# The Field is Open

**Going on, unable to order**
**a plot of land that is not a prison pen.**
**Monotony spreading, reflected in**
**nerve endings frantic with anxiety.**
**Repetitive motion, futility rises, and also that voice**
**that wants to turn even this into a ceremony,**
**but can't, can't stomach the steps, the one-by-one steps**
**of petty materialism that must be endured, focused**
**on, taken so seriously. Going on, like a torturous**
**continuance, swelling the mind with mealworm madness.**
**Going on, with no way out, a lifetime sentence,**
**a sorrow that has metastasised into despair.**

**Dig out, dig me out, let the miracle rise and cover**
**my home. Multiplying buds - at the entrance, entering,**
**side-stepping this sinister fate, slicing**
**the circle, cleared of the heavy shadows, cleared**
**to name a new street and walk down it.**

**Receiving like birds receive**
**music, breaking the ethereal framework,**
**dissolving the rut grime delusion,**
**peeking over the top, peace**
**taken into the mouth, peace**
**that is grace, that is receiving,**
**fastened freely to the flow.**

# The Last Say

**Call it an infestation of worms**
**floor-mapping your innards.**
**Call it an impossible current**
**directing you over the crater-fall**
**or a whispered breath ricocheting**
**inside your skull that whispers “Loser!**
**Fool! You have never belonged!”**

**But you must belong, you must let it burn you out,**
**possess you with its electrical charge. Turn on**
**the microphone and scream its ownership**
**over you. Call it debris - plastic bags in the belly**
**of a dolphin. Call it hot liquid iron rising**
**to seal your throat, lock it so you cannot swallow.**

**Imagine yourself a greenhouse and store**
**your treasure there, place your orphaned lizards**
**in vegetable beds and tell them they are safe,**
**give them a home to thrive in.**
**Don’t crash or perish, but open, stay open**
**even as your nerves are poltergeist-haunted**
**and the flower you grew, counted on to keep growing**
**is snapped at the stem, ground-level.**

**How can you change it? You can’t. It is summer.**
**The last day of school. You wanted to harness your heart,**
**give it a safety net far from the rocks,**
**but it is all a choice - autonomous.**
**This is your nest, put in it what you will.**
**Trust in the green juice inside your branches,**
**don’t let the ice-melting platform at your feet prevail.**

**God is tender so you must be too,**
**keep your tenderness afloat,**
**even when soaked in frigid water.**
**Let the pressure threaten**
**to kill you. It won't kill you.**

**Loosen the knot and climb under**
**the jettison cliff's edge.**
**Hang upside down. It is a long way to fall,**
**but your arms are strong and something stronger still**
**is holding you in its sustaining embrace.**

# Thread Count

**Tumble down**
**the ocean stairs,**
**mounting the whales' trail,**
**maneuvering depths and distances**
**unfathomed.**

**Dream in the city at 5 a.m., accustomed**
**to the speech that comes just before the birds**
**awake and take away all formation of song.**

**This doorway, like a driving marked nightmare**
**cursing your already blooming cloud. Tomorrow**
**is the same leg-chain to drag behind, the same**
**shrinking dome to be lived under.**

**But tonight, I have you like a burning death,**
**one spot burning, one place in the house, fast**
**and immediate, wielding shapes**
**out of tall-far-away trees, from mind spaces,**
**fresh as newborn fish navigating**
**coral reefs and seeing which caves to hide in**
**or seeing what is hiding in -**
**patient predators.**

**Tonight, the bath water is ready, rooting**
**my body to its sensations.**
**The spell is dissolved, and clarity**
**becomes gold, a hailstorm of ecstasy, reaping**
**many more than one plateau, gliding gigantic above**
**these graves, loud, rudimentary, I have you,**
**nailing the flame**
**to both of our sinking thighs.**

# Fingerprint

**Call it in,**
**into the palm,**
**into the spoon,**
**the upsidedown shell.**
**Hold its liquid grace**
**and walk slowly over hunchback hills,**
**tall weeds and cracked pavement.**
**Do not spill a drop.**

**Shield it from the sun**
**so it will not evaporate.**
**Shield it from the stars**
**so it does not recognize its kin**
**and claim its home back amongst them.**
**Shield it from the children**
**who naturally harness such vitality.**
**And also, from the animals,**
**they will gather it in their mouths**
**and feed it to their early-summer offspring,**
**knowing its worth.**

**Instead, call it in**
**because this small measure is only yours,**
**as long as you call it in and let all other things go,**
**go to serve your house and others.**
**As long as you know, possession here is paramount,**
**protection is integrity, is the way**
**to keep the sponge saturated, your jaw firm**
**in prayer.**

**Call it in,**
**into the brown jar on your sacred shelf,**
**anoint it secret, pay the wages**
**to ensure its safety. Sip from it,**
**sometimes a little, sometimes more than a little,**
**like rejoicing, like uncoiling, caught**
**pure, naked, in a space fully lit with**
**no off-switch or walls.**

# Lumin

**One of the greatest souls I ever met**
**was in the body of a rat.**
**She was pure and noble, dissolved**
**in gentle love, a smooth essence, easy**
**to dive into.**
**Her name was Lumin - named by my son**
**after the Shaolin clan virtue Focus.**
**In truth, it may sound crazy, something many**
**would smirk at or mock - but here she was -**
**holding an infinity of tenderness in her rat eyes,**
**every day, every night with her rat toes, her Dumbo ears**
**and her rat tail.**
**She had a brain tumour and lived a year with it -**
**recovering five times from the brink of death, holding space**
**in the chair, giving up her seat on the throne to stay with us.**
**Every night for hours we stayed together, often**
**just looking into each other's eyes.**
**No one could know. I could have never guessed**
**that I would love a rat this much,**
**that such an untroubled expansive heart**
**could dwell in one so small, so shunned and disrespected.**
**She loved and was able to receive love**
**like a child with her mother.**
**She saved my son during two years of teenage despair.**
**That was her music. There was nothing hard in her, nothing**
**that did not soften into joy - even when she was ill.**
**When she died**
**five minutes she struggled, panicked, lunging for breath.**
**My hands went on her. I prayed for God**
**to intervene with mercy.**

**For five more minutes she stopped lunging, was at ease,
gasping slightly, then stopped gasping
and the light radiated through and around her body,
and her breath and the beating of her chest stopped. Now
she is at rest, delighting fully in the wave.**

**One of the greatest friends I have ever had was a rat.
And I have and have lost many friends in many body forms -
she was a shrine of layered clarity and kindness. She
was a great being, a resting point in God's creation.**
**One of the greatest souls I have ever met
was in the body of a rat.**

**Please listen. please understand. Holy. Holy. Holy halleluiah.
We are all joined.**

## She said

**there is a man who walks around town**
**who thinks he is Elvis.**
**It is a cliché, I know, the crazy man who thinks he is Elvis.**
**But this guy is for real, she says.**

**He wears a white low-cut button suit, chest hairs showing,**
**and those 70's flared pants.**
**Sometimes, he even flaunts a red cape.**
**He wears a black wig that each week**
**the barber pretends to cut.**
**(That kind of compassion is rare!)**

**Everyone shows him kindness.**
**He gets free day-old muffins at the doughnut shop,**
**and when Joyce is working, she throws in a coffee.**

**How cool it would be to walk around in white,**
**feeling like a king, never paying for breakfast,**
**everyone smiling at you, treating you as a rarity.**

**People take pictures, videos, come up to him**
**and ask him to sing. He never does,**
**just lifts the one side of his lip**
**and dramatically flips his red velvety cape**

**purchased years ago**
**at the local used-clothing store.**

# Promised Land

**Past the burnt-down barn,**
**past the tracks of a narrow road**
**far into wilderness chaos, the clearing is found,**
**shelves are emptied, floors are once again seen.**
**The house is open like lips learning**
**how to talk instead of scream. There is peace**
**in the soundwaves, animals are**
**five-times-miracle-recovering**
**from the verge of death, upright, energy restored.**

**It was a long walk to the podium to finally have your say,**
**but the effort has paid off, the love given was not wasted**
**or disfigured permanently, was not solidified into**
**a lost-forever horrorshow as we thought it would.**

**Gold has returned to our pockets, water faucets are running,**
**laughter is common, coming from under doors.**
**Love is like it once was when we had our Rooms of Joy –**
**when we had each other, explorers of unending light.**

**Around the tree I dance my praise.**
**Gratitude I never expected,**
**years of trying to pet the violent horse's mane,**
**touch its forehead with a kiss –**
**now she is still, soft and free.**

**We made it past the dumpyards and the**
**foreign countries full of war and pillage.**
**We stayed the course, singing when we could, letting go**
**of hope in steady increments of necessity,**
**unravelling the last thread of our faith**

**until hell overtook. And in those relentless flames**
**we still believed and asked for mercy.**
**Mercy has come.**

**My home is happy once again. My children have returned,**
**married and bearing the seeds of deep maturity and there,**
**there, sprouting back after years of dormancy,**
**those glorious, sacred child-like smiles.**

# Wayside

**I have fallen by the wayside,**
**scrapped divinity for a taste**
**of the overflow.**
**Everytime speaking, I was**
**silenced like a nailed board**
**sealed above my head.**

**Summer**
**came in ruthless heat pulses**
**depleting the oxygen, terrorizing**
**nesting sparrows.**
**The lap pool was chemically soiled.**
**All manner of fungi bloomed,**
**as dark bonds visibly materialized.**

**Geometric interlocking**
**dimensional coveralls - covering all -**
**left side of my body decaying, chomped at**
**by an unswerving force, asking for my devotion,**
**demanding unquestioned servitude**
**regardless of devotion.**

**Blindly I fell into the river's fold,**
**no strength left in my upper arms**
**so I drifted to the wayside, into**
**muddy misquote egg-beds**
**and the hiding nooks of snakes**

**left there to breathe in fish-corpse fumes,**
**play footsie**
**with the washed ashore water-logged frogs,**
**dreaming amphibian dreams.**

# Homecoming

**Time and the matrix point**
**of nerves that sound off like**
**a dinner bell, riveting through**
**the body, vibrating the bones and all**
**that stands between.**

**You speak of shifting plateaus,**
**but the paint hasn't even left the brush,**
**the walls are cracked, veined and under**
**the watchful eyes of those who walk the halls.**

**The rules you treasure are intricate masterpieces**
**of divine tapestry but they are not the mud-sling**
**upheaval, unpredictable holy heartache,**
**muscle aches that mark us as we grow old, and touch**
**each other in the day-to-day of waking up,**
**sharing the bathroom, the kitchen, animals**
**who belong with us, depend on us, and sickness.**

**Here is my watering can. It is sufficient. It too has wisdom.**
**One eye only that blends and interprets all perceptions.**
**Here is my tale, my acts of shade, shelter and sun.**
**The seraphim drive home dreams in vows on fire,**
**born from nebulas and the hands**
**of the bricklayer and secretary.**

**Yours is one way, powerful, yes, but so are the trees,**
**a toddler's temper tantrum, the Lord's Prayer more so –**
**clasped hands, no separation, helpless, wordless,**
**at the beginning, saved.**

# Breaking

**Bitter patience, counting moonlight beams**
**on fledging grass stems.**
**Endure for the law that presses heavy and cold**
**against your chest.**
**Endure because there is no leaving**
**only traveling on.**
**Weapons put away, dressing**
**strictly for good form.**
**The planets rock back and forth,**
**bump against each other, but like us, are bonded,**
**unalterably glued to their personal constellations.**
**Irrational hope is the shadow I have,**
**the silent zone of my cortex that defeats reality, yet below**
**the storm gathers and changes course for no one.**
**What used to be roots are now tossed away, ripped**
**on the ridges of sidewalks like bubble gum wrappers.**
**Storm that has no subliminal meaning, is only storm,**
**gun shots in the wind. Patience.**

**Wait for the unwanted guest to go. Wait for your life**
**to mature finally into what you wish it would be.**

# Lighthouse gone under

**At the end of a dream, after the burning down,**
**is a sorrow, there and fixed**
**like a blockage to ensure failure of the flow**
**like a broken pipe,**
**letting flood the lighthouse tower.**

**It will drown the lighthouse,**
**even the tip and the ancient bricks below.**
**And in sinking and dispersing its form**
**under the water's pressure it will make a coral bed**
**for otherwise homeless creatures.**

**It will make an underwater greenhouse, a place for**
**tiny beings to hide, find shelter and explore.**
**It will go on longer down there, below the surface,**
**go on past decades, generations and nuclear explosions.**

**It will not be recognised for the tower and steady guiding light**
**it once held, but it will morph into a thriving community.**
**Its concrete flesh will grow breathing skin –**
**slippery green living follicles. It will endure**
**the winters above and the blank-eyed predators**
**maneuvering through its make-shift corridors.**

**This sorrow will take and it will be final.**
**And then it will give,**
**infusing a richer purpose, nurturing beating life**
**into the landscape of its shattered,**
**now restructured, bones.**

## Because it is a Stone

**Because it is a stone**
**the fire hits it, moves around,**
**changing shape like a wave.**

**Because grief is not a word**
**that counts footsteps or encapsulates**
**the butcher's madness, just builds like**
**a deep stagnant pool of a pond – one drop,**
**one drop, rising.**

**Because all the vegetables have not been picked through,**
**and more people hold compassion than they do hate,**
**the tree can grow, the fountain can flow up and make**
**a statement of solidarity, a sound**
**peaceful to those who are near.**

**Because the robin keeps coming back**
**to sit on my lawn, stares at me and waits**
**for my greeting before moving on.**

**Because hope is red eyes stinging,**
**but sight unimpaired,**
**and the darkening shadows darkening**
**the day-to-day landscape drift -**
**sometimes far away.**

**Because there is early morning, peppermint tea,**
**and love abides in everything living,**
**I can walk another step, another day,**
**bury the corpse of a treasured friend,**
**and place something beautiful**
**(a stone, a whisper) beside the grave.**

# I tilt back and see above

**a tiered canopy**
**that rises great heights, separating pockets of sky**
**- some blue, some with clouds -**
**layers, textures swaying in gentle phrases,**
**opening the hilltop-cap of grief**
**more like pouring in**
**the truth of helplessness,**
**setting free depths unspoken,**
**domed in such beauty.**

**Perfection that cannot be matched**
**or misplaced as mediocre or somewhat flawed,**
**but is flawed, not one straight line**
**or obedience to symmetry,**
**all space taken up with its fecund flesh.**

**No cell or stem rotted without reason, rotted**
**because of regret or the weight of culture**
**or the ridged mind-set of past tradition, but all the past**
**contained within it.**

**The ancient trunk expanded equally in the roots**
**and the leaf currents, intertwined with other currents**
**to build a blanket, thick enough to feel protected,**
**mesmerized by the soft motion overgrowth bloom,**
**a place to anchor a home, release all weapons, comforted.**

# I walked the Circle

**I walked in a strange place**
**where light was named darkness**
**and darkness named light**
**and knew it was my new home.**

**How can this be? I asked myself,**
**inspecting each inversion**
**of authenticity. Gravity, I answered,**
**wiping off dust, pulling down the thick clouds.**

**Sorrow crept into my sleep, confusion**
**hijacked my taste buds.**
**Beauty was seen only**
**in the plastic, unnaturally perfect.**
**And the mortal gift, betrayed.**

**Among the ants and rodents I felt safe,**
**pretended I was their kin, and they welcomed me.**
**We crept through weeds, jumped**
**branches and collected.**

**I gave myself a name,**
**refusing the strength of my true identity,**
**refusing the insight**
**I first had upon arrival.**
**The rivers looked blue that were really red,**
**the petal of the rose lost its bright juniper green.**
**Love lost the nipple flow of eternity and I didn't know**
**anyone I could lean my head upon.**

**Memory is rounded, has no starting point, is the point of time.**
**These are the consequences, linear trepidation and**
**the quenching of fear and the felt-superiority of every nation.**
**Because the bread crumbs became the feast and the feast**
**was swept under the rug, willfully ignored.**

**I love my chains, I admit it. I love the deep ache and bother**
**because it is familiar, inertia, mine. But here**
**I announce**
**I will trade it for connection, for inexperience, the courage**
**of extreme risk.**
**I will forge in unknown territory, set things right**
**at least here in my world.**
**I have no king in gravity. I have no sound**
**forbidden to me.**
**The war cry is a split tongue and it deceives.**
**My war cry is the path Jesus takes me on**
**- walk, run, sit down - that is the way.**

**There are better places.**
**I love the red tree. I love the folding cold fires, insects**
**on my arms. Take care. Descend. Pick up speed.**
**I had a father. I have a father no more.**
**I have children, now they are grown.**
**Shame on torment. Shame for not not**
**letting go. Shame on shame.**

**Judgement is set aside, hidden behind the bench.**
**The bird feeder is up, the bird bath too.**
**Let them come, the birds, all manner of beast and fowl.**
**Let them find sanctuary here.**

**All seasons, I am learning,**
**are holy places, and all colours**
**are sacred, unnameable, the same.**

# HolyGrail

**Let it spill,**
**let it move in me,**
**churn my intestines**
**realigning my matrix,**
**releasing the gnawing dead thing**
**tethered to my spine –**

**A butterfly sailing**
**Two cardinal mates nest-building**
**A golden pup leaning against my thigh**
**A squirrel, staring, close, deliberately eye-to-eye**

**God is my master**
**God is my loving parent**
**The scar will remain**
**but the wound is sealed**
**and the penicillin taken.**
**For I know love –**
**the fairytale soulmate dream.**
**I have held it and kissed it**
**now for 30 years.**
**It has born offspring, children**
**who are no longer children**
**who dream one day of children**
**of their own.**

**He calls me a master.**
**I call him the most wonderous being**
**I have ever known.**
**And we have walked together**

**through such horrors that when they did not destroy,**
**did irrevocably demean,**
**through the rocky edge of decline and crash, and**
**the kidnapped stride of so many happy moods,**
**learning that joy is not always a rising above**
**but is more often a plain-bread steady receiving,**
**is love that speaks and speaks**
**and never overstates or loses a word,**
**learning that we are rich and have never been forsaken,**
**honouring this purple flower amongst the weeds,**
**dedicated to this legendary love in the day to day,**
**in the tragedies of death, infant illnesses**
**and precious dreams deformed, collapsed.**
**Let it spill. I am already overflowing.**
**Let it clean what has not yet**
**been cleaned. I see the gift given,**
**this greatest of all visions manifested that**
**has braved itself to fruition over many lifetimes.**
**I see and now I am free**

**seeing we are already, and have been for so long,**
***(since the day our eyes locked electrified eternal and our bodies***
***were swept into that pure bliss oblivion Shangri-La vortex),***
**still dancing in the meadow, ripe with music**
**when we knew with certainty all our prayers were answered,**
**felt the quenching of our unbearable mutual loneliness,**
**as we twirled and we danced, divinely infused**
**with an ongoing source of strength, restoration**
**and river blaze.**

# Choosing

**to trade these hands**
**for a house in the forest, landed**
**on a hill above any risk of flood, but near**
**a flowing stream**

**to tear off the shingles**
**for an open view, converse with hawks,**
**whisk out the stale air and leave**
**the smell of rain**

**to untie myself from this ball-bearing spinning**
**spider's lair, empty that middle drawer and fill it**
**with the crust of shattered seeds, still green enough**
**to keep, keep**
**to help me make sense**
**of the seasons and explain the age of the moon,**
**keep them as momentums of gratitude, candy wrappers**
**or the dropped feather from a favourite pet - proof**
**of something once solid, soft and natural**

**to set the barn on fire**
**after everyone has moved out, and not**
**a swallow or mouse remains, gamble everything**
**on the gospel pages. This**

**is what**
**I am going to do, sooner than it takes a tide to**
**rise. I am going out the window, out on the street,**
**my face remade like when in the womb.**

**At first my loved ones will say Who?**
**Not before long, they will join me.**
**There on the street we will gather, cloistered as one.**
**There we will count to three, set out to race,**
**nothing at our heels, wide, in all directions.**

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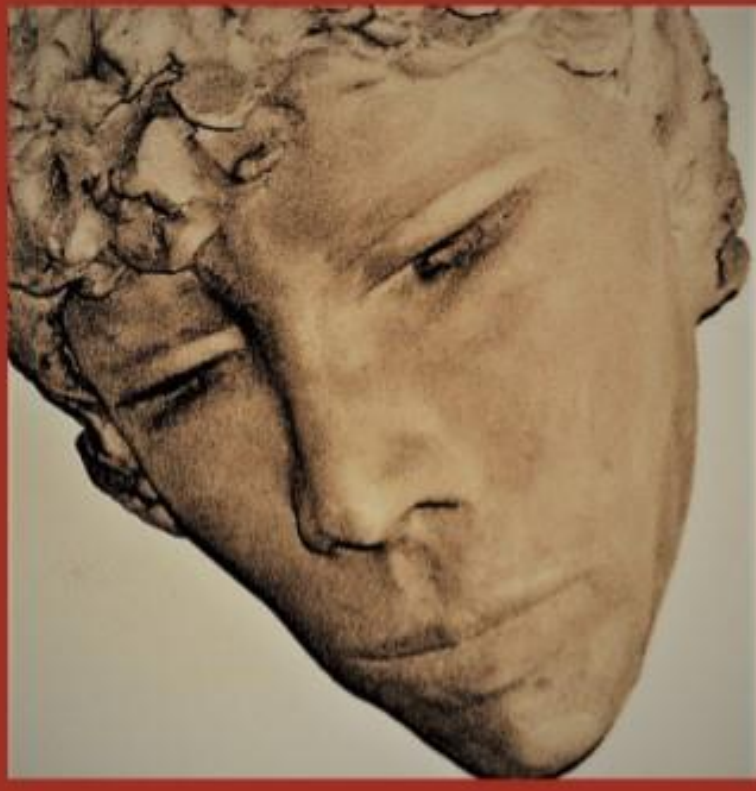
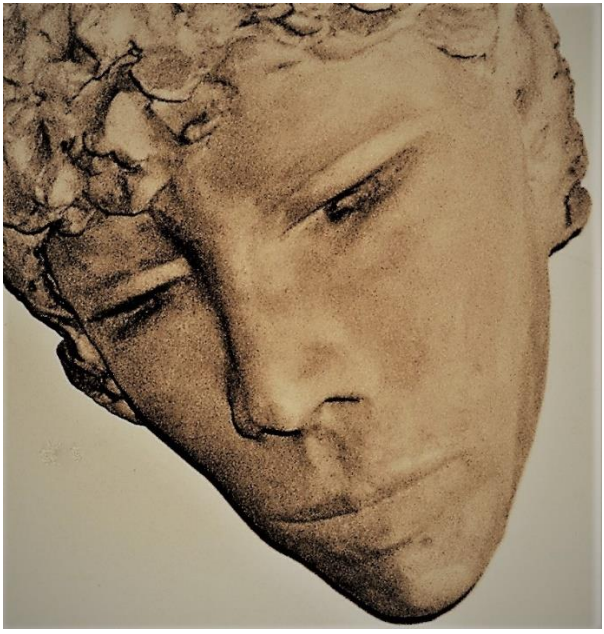
# If I Knew This Haunting

## The poetry of Allison Grayhurst



Allison Grayhurst

# *If I Knew This Haunting*



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# *A Glimpse*

# Caesar

**If I am going to speak of you, I want**
**to speak of you properly.**

**You were not a man fueled**
**solely by personal ambition, but had**
**a drawing-in blackhole endless taking,**
**sucking-in-energy latched tight to your soul.**
**You also had**
**a throbbing outward force**
**of inexhaustible restlessness**
**fused with your being. You had**
**fortune emboldened at your side.**
**You risked all for all-or-nothing in countless campaigns,**
**taut with a certainty no person should have to bear.**
**You did deeds no peer had**
**the courage or genius to execute, and standing still**
**in victory, you never rested but moved to the next goal**
**as swiftly as you conquered the last.**

*******

***If you loved God that way instead of war***
***you would have been more than you were –***
***more than the high priest of Rome or a king amongst kings.***
***If you came at the time of Jesus, knew Jesus,***
***Jesus would have satiated that terrible internal void,***
***plugged it, infused it with his light -***
***then you would have known peace***
***and your urgent voracity for power***
***would have been settled, stilled.***

***

**But as it were, living before Christ**
**you knew compassion,**
**were hated for your compassion,**
**by your own army and your enemy's.**
**You offered clemency more than you punished.**
**All were held captive by your generosity**
**as much as they were by your fierceness.**
**You maimed their pride with your kindness, deliberately,**
**those nobles, senators, those rulers locked in the grinding**
**wheel of rotating nullifying traditions. You stood outside**
**of your society, no patience to give attention**
**to their useless squabbles of self-important entitlement,**
**their togas of whitewashed**
**formality, their ass-burns for sitting so long**
**in debate, on the concrete horizontal plains**
**of arrested progress.**

**They needed you more than you needed them.**
**They needed your violent push, your confident disregard**
**for all they held as fact, sacred and forever-lasting.**
**Your ego was strong,**
**a compulsive force of relentless potency, but**
**your dignity was stronger.**
**They foiled your many attempts to make peace.**
**You were isolated because you felt yourself superior**
**burdened with an innate drive**
**that surpassed all of those that stood before you,**
**and those that came before you too.**

**Antony was nothing beside you, nor Crassus, Pompey,**
**Cato, Sulla, Servilia or even Cicero,**
**(though you envied Cicero his literary talent as you also**
**wrote books, and even poetry).**

*******

**But Caesar, did any one love you?**
**They feared, admired, hated and worshiped you,**
**but did they love you? I think your first wife did,**
**and your daughter with her, Julia,**
**and Cleopatra - she loved you - saw herself kindred**
**to a man of unsurpassed charm and authority.**
**She too was brilliant, ruthless and magnetic and not**
**the great pigeonholed beauty history claims.**
**The two of you together went too far.**
**With her, you lost your isolation and gained equality.**
**With her, you also lost your balance.**
**You became too much.**

**The senate fed your fate,**
**created monuments and celebrations**
**in your honour. While you stayed in Rome,**
**smothered by their demands,**
**you organized time, created the Calendar**
**and planned your next siege.**

**It has been told that you were a great lover of both sexes.**
**That your mere presence, cheerfulness and choice words**
**inspired armies to win when defeat was deemed inevitable.**
**You gave your soldiers the autonomy to choose you,**
**and they always chose you.**

*******

**Over dinner, the night before you were murdered**
**the senators asked you**
**"what would be the best kind of death?"**
**and you said "quick, unexpected"**
**They gathered around you, 23 of them,**
**each taking a vicious plunge,**
**thinking they could backtrack, mend**
**what you dismantled, when instead**
**their calculated betrayal destroyed the Republic**
**they wanted to preserve. And for you,**

**they furnished the stage of your last act,**
**marked even more immortal by Shakespeare,**
**brought to its apex by your protege Brutus.**
**Bleeding and overpowered,**
**you covered your head with your cloak, knowing**
**the oracle was right.**
**You, ancestor of Venus – died**
**one of the most remembered deaths in history, died**
**a death befitting your life, claiming your place**
**on par with the ancient gods.**

*******

**If I am going to speak of him I want**
**to speak of him properly.**

**This sometimes-tyrant,**
**this namesake of July and a comet,**
**this forger of the clip-clawed Libra constellation,**
**was like an inedible mark,**
**a perfect creature aligned**
**with inner and celestial interlocking geometry.**
**His impatience and discipline**
**grew parallel, equal in calibre within him.**
**In him there was nothing lethargic,**
**no detrimental indulgences**
**and nothing chaotic.**

**Crossing the Rubicon, always forward moving,**
**daring, leaping outside the lines**
**afraid more of failure than of death,**
**he stayed the path, never compromising,**
**humbled only by the voice**
**that stormed triumphant in his head.**

***The voice, when waking***
***he never spoke about, but when sleeping,***
***gripped him, strained, strengthening his zeal,***
***igniting a landmark pure devotion.***

**He was made for that point in time and space,**
**to enact that exact mythology, a destiny**
**etched like a laurel wreath into the skin around**
**a zenith fixed star.**

# A Glimpse

**There was a glimpse**
**of a sunrise, a dazzling ending**
**and wild grass, lush and life-filled**
**to walk towards, into, barefoot and perfect**
**as God's grace is perfect, reducing the darkness**
**unnameable and innocence, reclaimed.**

**There was a moment**
**when I could see like a prophet sees**
**or a sorcerer, flexing joy in dimensional**
**vividness, dilated, stripped of**
**my armour, tension and dread.**

**Army on a hill, hungering for the water flowing**
**downstream. Woman on a ship, surrounded**
**by the sea with a kicking babe in her expanded belly.**
**Is there land? Is it heaven or just a dream?**

**If I risk, I risk it all**
**with nothing to risk it for in sight.**
**If I stay, I am a drowned clover,**
**no different than the meat-eaters,**
**the non-shapeshifters and the drones.**

*******

**What do I say to the arrested vision,**
**the backward plucking?**
**I had a glimpse, a gift**
**of jewels overflowing.**
**Am I mad, believing? I think I am,**
**trapped in this curse – hours upon years**
**chipping at the granite with my teeth, pushing**
**my way through with no end in sight, damaging**
**the sack around my heart,**
**relentlessly fulfilling my duty.**

**There was a glimpse,**
**something of God in a ghost-filled place.**

**Someone tells me to believe that this darkness**
**is ending, that the gamble is launched**
**and victory is already**
**in my hands.**

*******

**If I could astral-project, I would go**
**to that place I glimpsed, just to be sure it was there.**
**If I could be more than I am, I could find peace**
**in the corner of this prison cell.**

**The birds say one thing, and my body another.**

**The glimpse was here and it was hope.**
**I will not deny its existence.**
**I will not fight its wound or its expectation,**
**but surrendering to my limitations,**
**into the wet earth,**
**I will give way, pacified.**

# Words

**I**

**The words came**
**and killed the hostages,**
**killed the ghosts stuck**
**in crevices of crow's feet eyes**
**and in the long book of regrets and what ifs.**

**The words came and said:**
**the greatest indication**
**of spiritual immaturity**
**is the lack of gratitude.**

**The words were singular, pounded their plurality**
**into one soft mass, or like pieces of glass**
**heated, liquified, blending smoothly**
**the dangerous edges.**

**The words came as two hawks hovering**
**in surreal stillness and then came again**
**in the small measles-scar of someone I knew**
**as a child, seen again as an adult, flooding me**
**with a memory and an affirmation**

**that the spaces between**
**this time and that time**
**do not exist, not as a ladder, not as fossil bones**
**but those spaces somehow existing, contain**
**the intrinsic value of eternity.**

**II**

**The words came**
**and were excellent company – said:**

**hear the melody while joining with each note,**
**be absorbed into its specific portrait.**

**The words said: pause,**
**brought me into the sun rising over the field,**
**out of the dark forest that was covered with bramble**
**and dead rooted trees.**

**I found a way out, I held a hand, briefly,**
**but long enough to be healed.**
**I saw the old cat smiling on the mat,**
**the old dog as happy**
**as he was when he was young,**
**a house embroidered with the harmony**
**that comes after journeying**
**through the trapped corridors of hell.**

**III**

**I am on horseback with my chestnut-red friend,**
**galloping near the round edge, certain of our flight -**
**both of us embodying a perpetual exhilaration,**

> **and where, where are we going? so fast?**
> **so in tune? - no words now -**
> **just a sweet-nectar symbiotic flow.**

**Call these words a dream. Call them bohemian.**
**Back away. Throw the stone. Seal them.**

**All bars and walls are purgatory-spent,**
**blown over**
**(*lick your lips, let the spider live*)**

**blow it over, behind.**

# Slipping off the Side

**Never holding, always holding**
**up, down, back**
**past the white-light knockout strike,**
**the broken dishes, the failed vision.**
**Always guilt as agency – sweet sun**
**out of reach, when reached, just a hot huge**
**stone that must be released. Watching the reptilian**
**garden diggers, the small-soul claim joy in evil,**
**sit on the hay stack, seeding its throne**
**and start a royal lineage.**

**Entire bloodlines behind bars - Children hated.**
**I see the same name on all my friends' faces.**
**My insides have become strewed.**
**I have only a guiding breath breeze in**
**a state of blindness, dialectics, repetitions**
**saying "Do not be attached". Out of the box**
**then back in again.**

**I would make a casserole if I knew how.**
**I would connect everyone**
**with a wink if the power was mine, if the cracking**
**double-take shame would release me -**
**moult and moult until it was small, easy enough to crush**
**and smear on the pavement.**
**I have shed these chains twice, maybe more,**
**maybe their returning power is just an illusion,**
**a phantom captivity.**

**When I was in the blue room with an entrance to the attic,**
**entities ripped into my skull when I slept,**
**channelling their destructive vocations.**
**I prayed on the forest floor and burned pages and pages**
**of long-hand. That was when**
**I stopped swimming and learned how to ride horses, before**
**I almost joined a neighbourhood,**
**whizzed past neighbours on a bike, leaving a mark.**
**I wish I was caught in the loop of simple competition,**
**knew my place at the starting line,**
**claiming trophies at the finish line,**
**climbing tall chunky trees in the summer or**
**racing up and down fire escapes for the fun of it.**

# A Journey in Four Parts

## Part One - Acceptance of Realty

*******

***(facing the unmovable block)***

**This is the branch that holds you**

**Precision and discipline**
**are the two things needed to win.**
**Win what? A war. A deadline. Victory**
**in a failing dream.**

**Blend the monotone flame,**
**build it up to fruition so it consumes**
**the skin, and then the liver and kidneys within.**
**Stay the course in spite of the flame,**
**in spite of feeling divinely betrayed.**

**Summer is not for you. Nor is fainting,**
**or fading, devoured by futility.**
**Bite the salt cube, be a door not a wheel.**
**Take what is shattered, glue a mosaic garden,**
**a place the rain can settle, and after it settles, shine.**

**Borrow nothing. Depend on only yourself**
**to be your own ambassador, mentor, fan.**
**Stand without dripping. Keep your hands**
**clean of self-pity, unstained and soft**
**as when you were first born.**

**It is a train ride, stopping at many**
**dilapidated stations.**
**A long time ago you had medals, owned a crown.**
**It never brought you peace.**

**If you are fragrant,**
**if you are foul-**
**it doesn't matter.**
**Humble yourself to the journey,**
**let the corpses bloat themselves, feeding**
**on the putrid elements of greed and anger.**

**Do what you do best: March,**
**serve and sometimes sing, finding comfort**
**in a foot-soldier's rudimentary song.**

*******

***(held tighter by the tentacles of hell)***

**Snip the Seams**

**Snip the cord**
**Snip the line**

**Denial is suffering**
**under the veil of false**
**understanding.**
**The wound is the womb,**
**the low-road and the high shore-line.**

**Snip all means of flight,**
**all laws and inhibitions.**

**Shapes made are never final,**
**words too, alter meaning.**
**Look and snip**
**the draining pipe, the solid memory.**
**The way you were sure was open**
**but never was, snip**
**and be done with it.**

**Why the painter who cannot paint, hot days**
**in global-warming winter,**
**the bird bath with a hole?**

**Scissor-queen, wire-cutter machine, bow**
**to the bitter land before you, make peace**
**with the locking tide. Snip**

**the pictures from the walls,**
**the broken limb from the rest of the body.**
**Try it on. Wear it before a mirror, into a crowd.**
**Pass over the keys.**

**Take tomorrow, hold tomorrow now**
**and snip.**

## Part Two – Interlude

***(maybe Yes)***

### Smelling the Salted Air

**When I fell**
**I was half-metal, half-mush.**
**The blood spilled would have killed**
**another, but I was blessed with**
**resilience and the head-down-ploughing-through.**
**When I was down there on the hard oblivion dirt,**
**I wished my anguish would have devoured me,**
**that somehow I would stop with dutiful tasks**
**and allow my mind to reach insanity's pinnacle.**
**But I kept going, moving my limbs – first fingers,**
**then forearm, searching for scraps, nourishment**
**in the garbage heap I fell on.**
**No one came to carry me home**
**to their bed of fine linen and clean water. No miracle**
**lifted me from that impassable barrier, but I moved through,**
**I don't even know how, alone and broken,**
**my arteries split, my mind lost in the bardo-realm.**

**Finally, strong-kneed, healing, a small**
**cavity within is opening, filling with hope.**
**I know myself in this fiery affirming pulse,**
**know that freedom from the fall**
**and freedom from the shackles**
**that encumbered me to stumble and fall**
**is my only chance for grain.**

**If I climb back up that ridge, allow myself**
**to be chained – the next time down**
**will be my last.**

**Now that I am up, walking and free, I see**
**behind me soot and murder – impersonal and brutal**
**just because.**

**Ahead, I can make it, make myself a ship**
**to weather any wave.**

**Ahead, I can keep myself open, love deeply.**
**I can be tender, build furniture in the sunlight**
**or just run with the running water,**
**up or down stream.**

## Part Three – Commitment to the Impossible

*******

***(ripping off the rooftop, chipping at the floor)***

**Wake!**

**Travel with the donkey**
**to the place where your**
**thirst is quenched.**
**Look into the eyes of a farm cow**
**and tell her stories of glory.**
**Leave all your wounds in an unmarked grave.**

**Those wounds only put weight on your back,**
**around your belly.**
**They are not symbols of your grandeur,**
**but only fed your self-pity, tying you to**
**a moaning sorrow.**

**Walk out the door and wake.**
**Ring the meditation-bowl bell.**
**Don't resist your freedom or sabotage**
**the foreclosure of the haunted warehouse**
**where you spent many years alone trying to slay**
**the undecipherable.**

**It was never a church nor is it even worthy**
**of a keepsake box of collected hardships like the hardship**

**when your children moved through serious illness**
**and you moved with them, holding out to, onto**
**the angels surrounding.**

**This has no life-pulse. Its pain**
**never brought you closer to God.**
**It is waste, decay - don't drag any part of it with you**
**as you move forward into a complete tomorrow.**

**It formed its own geography within, its own army**
**of ruthless intent, pitted against your joy.**
**Dislodge that piece of land from the rest of yourself**
**like a useless limb to sever.**

**The sun is opening. It has opened.**
**Accept your good health and wake.**
**Your left hand is now a flower.**

*******

***(it is a decision, mutually yours and God's)***

**I Take In**

**I take in the fire,**
**the light of dreams,**
**take it into my core**
**to swish around**
**and build movement, a whirlpool**
**energy expanding, patching**
**broken roots on the way, manipulating**
**days of service to grow a tree**
**that will sustain long after the forest floor sinks**
**into the sea.**

**I take reality and strip it of its elected principals,**
**reform its origins to reveal miracles,**
**downpours of fixed definitions dissolving into**
**a running stream.**

**I take the pen and make corrections,**
**here and here until all truths co-related to the truth**
**within me, until I have no employment but to follow**
**the dictates of the divine, and know this power**
**as I know my own gait, my lover's touch,**
**the smiles of my children.**

**I take the chaos of circumstance and make a string**
**to guide my way through, hold and follow -**
**one string, one line, golden, formed,**
**unbreakable as a covenant bond.**

## Part Four – The Light is Found

*(everything belongs to God)*

### Green Patches on Open Ground

**Bow down and accept**
**the particle blue,**
**the strength of the beating sun.**

**In the flame you were born,**
**keep it alive, as pure as**
**squeezed lemon juice, as precious**
**as water in the holy grail.**

**Wherever you go, the miracle**
**is in the listening, in steamrolling**
**resentments, bitterness and the weight of time.**

**If you must go back, then trust**
**what binds you to life is stronger and will prevail.**
**Surrender to the secret. In a second, tumbledown,**
**join a choir and let your song be layered.**

**Honey drips from the windowsill.**
**Collect it in jars and feast. God is great**
**and only what is connected to God**
**can know greatness.**
**Re-embrace the purity of truth and be delivered.**
**Renew your sacred vows, let the vowels join the consonants**
**and form words. Cloud. Peach. Clean.**
**Be filled with your personal seraphim's blood.**
**Get behind the line and follow.**

**This house is an eagle stretching her wings**
**over her young. It is holy and it is alive.**
**Your blessings are not meagre,**
**but monumental as a babe's first breath,**
**as yes&no combined.**

**You have been retrieved from the dumpster,**
**many are not -**
**but are left in a crusting-over broken shell, infested**
**with insects and slowly-devouring disease.**

**Yourself, once a fallen workhorse,**
**now unbridled, set free - wild and roaming, racing**
**neck-to-neck with kin, flooded with pure-power instinct,**
**at one with the wind, the hills, places to graze.**

# *Pendulum*

# Bulb Flower

**The far and withered bulb flower**
**I planted when I was a child,**
**long ago shaken by years of wind**
**and rotted to its core –**
**now that it has all but disappeared**
**even as a crust upon the Earth,**
**has it found shape again in something living,**
**or backtracked to the volcano heart**
**of a mythical land?**

**Does it sigh for the sun or cry**
**when it hears a frog's slow croak?**
**Does it do as I do now, watch**
**rain fall on stones, or is it part of a low-creepy thing**
**that lacks shadow and intent?**

**Does it sleep in the moss or**
**is it clay for a sculptor's hungry hands?**
**Does it float through the seas as a jellyfish**
**or hop the meadows wild?**

**The far and withered blub flower**
**I planted when I was a child,**
**maybe today I saw it again**
**in the squirrel crossing the street**
**or maybe in that great tomato that was**
**my lunch, it returned**
**to now nourish my grown-up bones.**

## Face to Face

**We rise to deliver**
**our final wounds.**

**I hang from an inward thread,**
**frayed by storm. You**
**sit in your chair, plastered**
**with brittle privacy.**
**Neither of us moves to warm the air.**
**The floor between turns to quicksand**
**with a thick layer of hovering mosquitoes above.**
**Anger with a voice too tight to speak**
**takes the form of ant-like apparitions, covering**
**our four-corned walls.**

**It will be done. We will be bone**
**and nothing else when this is through.**
**It will not matter,**
**the scent of our first or final kiss**
**for the proud demon-martyrs**
**embracing our ribs,**
**taking seat on our laps**
**have all but swallowed us whole,**
**conquered.**

# Even Though

**Even attempting to climb the perilous cliff,**
**I am not afraid of falling.**
**The sensual rhythms of this lonely morning**
**devour me, reconciled**
**to my private chamber, suspended.**

**Far under the cliff, the gulls**
**are united with the ocean, as that**
**deep blue speckled-white**
**beckons me to its bed.**

**Wolves and warriors are rooted to the hunt.**
**I am rooted to this risk, edge-clinging,**
**fated to ultimately rest**
**in the body of a miracle.**

**There are miles below and miles above,**
**awakening sounds of insects burrowing,**
**of swallows nest-emerging -**
**a holy vapour all around that fills**
**the void with necessity.**

## Out of Dreams

**Like clay brick eroded**
**by rain, thoughts sear**
**my better part, calling me**
**to the altar, to kneel and**
**discipline these fantastical wanderings.**
**Like an egg yolk pierced, I spill**
**my substance flat across the frying pan.**
**I live in the time just before dawn.**
**I curse the crocodile but praise**
**its authority. The clock strikes seven**
**and I have lost my sparrow for good.**
**I have waited for the change, wished myself more**
**than this life, making a remedy from imagination.**
**I will walk the straight line as an experiment, walk**
**to feel like a buttercup flower tied to the forest floor -**
**satisfied with its display of tiny splendor, at peace**
**with its place amongst the aged trees.**

## Daughter of the Streets

**She has no**
**light but that**
**of effervescent clouds.**

**She has her days**
**in doorways, sleeping**
**on abandoned stairs,**
**folding her arms**
**in laughter.**

**She has a man in her mind,**
**but cannot remember his**
**name, cannot bear the cold**
**stares of animals who watch**
**from distant trees.**

**She has many dimensions**
**in her bones and in her pain,**
**has not reached her final year**
**though time has lost its pace**
**in her blood, though fire and milk**
**leave her with equal indifference,**
**and her memory is an ancient tongue**
**in need of translation.**

## Once and Forever

**Love pulls the ghost into being,**

**the burnt-heart into the shade**

**and comforts and forgives and bears**

**all wounds with blinding devotion**

**to transform.**

**Love is the ledge**

**where the starling sits, praising**

**the twilight's fall.**

**Love is the enemy unmasked**

**of its endless destruction, the topless**

**flowers that sound no blame into**

**the wind.**

**Love has no ruin, but hails and**

**hails to every heart,**

**delivering.**

## You Shaped My Song, Then Left

**Voyaging down beside the worms**
**through the abscess of earth to hold**
**a gem stone sinking.**

**My roots have been seized**
**by their rival the wind,**
**unable to alter the atmosphere.**

**My love leans between**
**opposing worlds, wanting**
**to erect hope where hope**
**can no longer sustain.**

**This place of uncommon intensity,**
**a place a little closer to the window**
**where my thoughts can rest on only**
**the setting sun and you.**

# Kitten

**Cut glass on flesh.**

**Claws extended,**
**playfully**
**mean, pouncing**
**with dagger intent.**
**Ears folded, and then**

**the sweet distance**
**from leg to shoulder, tiny muscles**
**stretched, releasing a miracle purr.**

**Nose, nuzzling my hair**
**licking with love every**
**red knotted strand.**

**Head, light as a penny, nods,**
**slips away into sleep,**
**elemental.**

# Heavy As Any Ache

**We cannot**
**hang in the grip of this cloud**
**for long. The waste**
**of bad habits, concealing**
**kindness with a show**
**of wit. Sarcasm as fatal**
**as a cut throat or plain as**
**a child's cry.**
**Hearts stuffed with**
**hollow match-stick crimes.**

**Counter clockwise the sun spins. The moon**
**climbs the back of an angel, breaks**
**her thin spine.**

**You look the other way, look for a hero**
**rising from your hands, for a rainbow**
**in my flooded eyes.**

**It cannot be done. We cannot be more**
**than mortal.**

# Waking Up

**In the dawn's light clearing, I sweep**
**the glacier clouds**
**reach**
**my arms to your flesh, awakened from dream.**

**Plunging into ethereal**
**substance, head pressurized with fatigue,**
**your body pulled close to mine, and legs**
**criss-crossed like swords laid down –**

**I glance up**
**through our window, then down**
**to watch you roll over:**
**naturally revealed.**

# Little Fly

**Little fly**
**are you lonely**
**like I?**
**Do you pray for**
**your day to come soon**
**or dream of the sun**
**on a cold afternoon?**
**Little fly**
**are you lonely**
**like I?**

**Come then,**
**let me kiss you.**

# Pendulum

**Remove the spies**
**from my grief.**
**I cannot defend myself**
**with such pale armour.**
**I cannot tell you it will be eternal,**
**this day in which I burn for your soft mouth.**
**I cannot say the door is there,**
**it is always there.**
**I drown kisses on your neck.**
**I reach that wave of endless choice,**
**returning from episode to episode**
**of our unforgettable unions. And then**
**the stars seem to stumble around**
**the globe, tripping for no reason**
**into grave oblivion. Like us, they have**
**their secrets and sorrows they cannot**
**share. Like us, they glow in the night's**
**pool-deep eye, unanchored**
**despite the gravity.**

# A Day To Recognize

**Fields of**
**mystics invading**
**my mind.**
**My womb is full**
**of mercy's fine touch. Ideals**
**call and create**
**gusts of sobs. Sombre**
**smooth skin**
**and smoke**
**spiralling into**
**the air.**
**Sudden glory,**
**swift as**
**a dagger**
**and then**
**nothing at**
**all. My**
**tongue is**
**curled into**
**a knot –**
**What is**
**the point**
**of speaking?**
**I hold**
**my mouth**
**in the**
**stance of**
**song. I see**

**waves**
**in the sky**
**brushed by a wink**
**of**
**silver-spliced**
**caresses.**

# City Unborn

**Out**
**on the sidewalk fringe**
**gulls converse in hostile tones.**

**Church doors open,**
**taking in all who care**
**to milk their withered souls.**

**Construction in the distance.**
**Towels hanging from clotheslines.**

**A dead pigeon lies**
**crushed on the road,**

**ignored**
**like the blazing buttercups**
**and love.**

# It Takes You

**Through the asylum streets**
**where the rain butters my hands**
**and mowed weeds scatter in piles on the curbs,**
**I look for your familiar figure**
**rushing between rush-hour strangers.**

**My bed is stale**
**with you wandering**
**from donut shop to open stages**
**silent and bewitched**
**by the lunar**
**mouth.**

**I reach my hand to cup**
**an autumn leaf descending**
**and feel**
**feather-dust**
**feather blown.**

## Whenever I touch him

**Heavy shackle**
**around my shell.**
**He says no, no,**
**to the great descent**

**to hands locked in the wind,**
**on pillow or sheets.**

**October sun beating on my covered spine**
**So many walls erected in the name of home**

**He talks of black birds glowing**
**or running into webs as wide**
**as a tree's open arms.**

# The Ground We Touch

**No lust to sing of or heartbreak**
**to bury. Circling the golden fields**
**of yesterdays gone,**
**coiling the hooded tomorrows**

**and all the white folds**
**of sky. Under**
**the driftwood stars,**
**a thousand sleepers drain the**
**waters from zenith high.**

**They crash down, sinking into**
**bedrock, stumbling below where**
**no bird could breathe.**
**And above where the oceans**
**burn and roll, fish take flight**
**like a million moons.**

# The River

**Toads and kestrels shape**
**the river's being.**
**Being what? But song**
**and bird's breath**
**and even lovers who need**
**her current, her living fury**
**that communes equally with the sun and moon.**

**Seedlings and butterflies,**
**the river engulfs all in her rushing blood.**
**Death reflects beautifully in her**
**foaming shine. And the devil's rage**
**the salmon's struggle, the child's tossed-in penny**
**shapes her surly figure, is wine to her thirsty veins.**

**Branches and stones**
**vanish in her womb where never**
**the light has crept. Snails ride**
**her flesh to shore.**

**And though she is tired, she never rests,**
**desperate to embrace the sea, to ride**
**his undulating loins, and be bonded forever**
**to his salty grandeur.**

# But if I Look

**If I keep thinking**
**how my hopes can flourish**
**in these seemingly luckless years,**
**soon I will be mad**
**with fear and futility.**

**But if I look at the branches of trees**
**stretching upward, individual as any**
**ancient god, and look and feel**
**their surety, complexity and peace . . .**
**If I strive to learn one thing from their**
**underappreciated presence, then awakened**
**I would be like a mustard seed**
**touched by sunlight.**

# Gathering Joy for the Eye of God

**For the lions and toads**
**in salvation's nakedness**
**gather joy for the eye of God**

**For the squirrels that leap and the thrushes**
**that fly into clouds and the morning sky**
**like a pink sea, capturing the delight**
**of every waking child**
**For the infant who cut his toe**
**and the pregnant woman dancing stripped of clothes**
**For the cat watching out the window**
**and the stallion and mare in mating fury**
**For grass returning after being crushed by snow**
**and music seeping from a woman's middle-aged throat**
**For the one-winged hawk and the blind opossum**
**For the architect's dream and the writer's**
**unwritten vision**
**For the loneliness inherent in us all**
**and the longing and the ways for fulfilment**
**For the graveyards in the fall and the elephants drunk**
**on African leaves, for those who hear the insects' cheep**
**and for those who burn, blind, undefined**
**and raging**
**For the television screen enjoyed by two**
**and the worm rescued from a torrential rain**
**For those who love and those who choose**
**to forgive though every nerve commands**
**their heart to harden and yield to hate**

**gather joy for the eye of God.**

## Seed of Living

**Mostly possibilities**
**return a million times**
**over: the chance**
**in every life cycle**
**to escape**
**patterned destinations.**

**I could tear my breath**
**in half attempting**
**a different rhythm.**
**I could be burning, bloated**
**on mistakes and bad beginnings.**

**Nightmares flail across the void,**
**sinking through**
**unimaginable universes.**
**Then tomorrow, the television,**
**the zodiac spin, anger at circumstances.**
**It is the condition that makes sway**
**dandelion leaves, breaks**
**the stem of the sunflower.**

**As dusk denies every pent-up demand.**
**As morning cleanses every hard-held need**
**obsolete.**

## Rocking Towers

**Tonight, the void creeps**
**in, with him, through**
**the wood framed doors.**
**cold**
**like a heap of ash after**
**a day underground.**
**Hair-splits**
**the bone, the eager heart, the eyes**
**that follow every gesture.**

**What survives now of the tower dream,**
**the stone skipping and the wishing well?**

**Both hands pressed against the T.V. set,**
**trying to block the talk**
**and hold**
**the cut and thistle.**

**Both lovers glancing at the street lights'**
**glare, waiting**
**for the other to give**
**the word –**
**a blue blue touch**
**farewell.**

## Pieces to Gather

**A drowned fish, silver, snared**
**with an expression of permanent ache.**
**Eyes, fish stunned, fish glass**
**glaring from a window in the market**
**in the dubious afternoon.**
**The shattered green**
**of ocean from a storm-struck sky,**
**lightening-flesh tipping, ripping the lid**
**and letting in the rains.**
**Mountains of harsh winters, opaque**
**like the wings on a featherless angel.**
**Mountains, male in their faith and in their marriage**
**to moonlight.**
**Chains, slate grey and criminal**
**as clouds over rainbows, as necessary**
**as a first childhood dream**
**laughed at, forgotten.**

# We Rode

**We rode our wounded dream**
**to a place drawn out like Prairie**
**ground. A washcloth was all we needed,**
**a sacred rock or stepping stone.**

**Lingering there with useless hands,**
**many times ready for the culling field,**
**holding elephant bones under**
**condemning light.**

**We swept the dead-end from our horizon.**
**We lived looking within, seeking out some mercy**
**behind our bondage.**

**This land knew our pacing,**
**our ineffectual pilgrimage.**
**It was fire and still burns like war or**
**a fallen constellation.**

**We spun our wishes in mid-air,**
**tilled the lifeless soil**

**mourning the hot metal**
**that poured between good fortune**
**and the bloodstains of destiny.**

# After the Day

**Love is in my belly like evening tea,**
**comforting after the day's rush.**
**Love is there like a discipline**
**I used to own, exciting**
**because of its blind determination.**

**The old man walks the alleyway**
**with his cane and curious eyes.**
**He waves to me from the window, then**
**stretches him arms to cup the wind.**
**Somewhere the stray has been saved**
**from the freezing-frost. Somewhere**
**a woman has conceived, and a dog**
**has found his favourite toy.**

**Love is a monk's old robe**
**tainted a rich bluish green.**
**Like twilight blankets the day**
**it sits on my lap covering -**
**cherished, unclaimed.**

# I Dreamt Again

**I dreamt again**
**of the past encroaching**
**like a wet towel, tight**
**around my clothed body.**
**I dreamt I felt alone, doomed to dance**
**on a suspended scaffold's floor.**

**Among the bitter people I walked,**
**near their self-pity and inconsolable isolation.**
**I tried to separate myself, split the heavy air**
**with my fingers. I tried**
**to wave their fear into the mouth**
**of everlasting light.**
**But love was bitten at the stem,**
**and the hideous thirst within**
**grew again like a snake its second, tougher skin.**

**I dreamt I wandered half-made buildings,**
**where squatters lived, sheltered**
**in the dank concrete ruins.**
**I travelled through without shoes, dreaming**
**of sand-soft ground.**

## Something New

**I hold my love before you**
**in the silver eye of winter.**
**I nudge myself from a restless year,**
**dancing upon the crust of a breaking wave.**
**I feel the taste of Japanese ginger enter my mouth.**
**My head is full of phantoms. My fingerprints**
**are held hovering inches from fire.**
**Starships and everglades are overturned.**
**Thumbs are caught in car doors.**
**The blunt scythe of Death carves, shredding**
**history's figures of ruthless pride.**
**Ideas of beauty change from century to century**
**but not ambition, not the way**
**the ego demands to be heard,**
**regardless of brutality or waste.**
**I open the empty pantry. I write down names**
**on the pieces of a shattered lamp post.**
**In the silver eye of winter,**
**I hold my love before you.**

# Years Before His Resurrection

**On the sidelines**
**in a tale as lasting as fairy tales**
**he recounted the details**
**of his Russian heritage,**
**several centuries past.**
**Through an open window**
**he stretched his neck and laughed**
**at all the sidewalk walkers**
**walking beneath him.**
**With tortured eyes and soft, cold skin,**
**he spent his time playing piano in candle light, sometimes**
**counting his collection of exotic butterflies.**
**He longed for death or for some substance**
**in the wind. He caught the night between**
**his eyelashes, reading Nostradamus outload.**
**Behind closed curtains he nourished the cavity within**
**by reciting the prayers of obscure saints, offering appeasement**
**to his guilt that no hope could overcome. He was not**
**a typical man, not proud, not tender,**
**but full of churning lava, full like a storm cloud**
**before the storm, like the belly**
**of a soon-to-be mother, full and focused**
**like a predator sensing**
**the frightened heart of its prey.**

# Dried Heroism

**The void comes and contains me.**
**Who picks the last straw**
**fated to carry the dynamite?**
**On shore, near a fern tree**
**I saw an umbrella break**
**and a worm exposed to the wind's wet fury.**

**How I long for more than a nickel's worth**
**of comfort in my shoes,**
**for a spoonful of light in my mouth,**
**to kiss its translucency and praise midnight**
**gone.**

**Shame is not my therapy, but fading**
**fragile as sanity often is,**
**wanting a sign from God but finding**
**cars recklessly racing over speed bumps, rain water**
**flooding in mid-winter and an empty stomach.**

**How to dance on this floor of dread, learn**
**to feed my horses washed seaweed**
**when all the grass is dead**

**How to see my future as more**
**than a tiny creature scurrying helplessly**
**in the folds of an infant's hand**

# *Calling In*

# The Journey Continued in Four Parts

## Part One – The Step

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*(barren metallic fields,*
*a harvest ready to haul, infested,*
*lock-jaw stagnation)*

### Never Holy

**You asked for a light**
**at the end of the tunnel**
**and was told**
**there is no light at the end**
**because you are the light**
**guiding your escape.**
**You are the living fresh-water fountain**
**you seek, the high rock in the ocean.**

**Then you were told there is no tunnel,**
**no distance between the dark and light.**
**There is pain and loyalty to that pain**
**and false hopes that claim us**
**like a deceitful friend plotting betrayal.**

**You were told to be glad at daybreak, when the battle**
**ensues. Against the rain, don't have any secrets,**
**even let your own death be revealed.**

**You were told never stop longing for the clarity**
**of your spirit, give no one up to the slaughter,**
**eat only what does not scream or thrash.**
**If there is a high wall, climb.**
**If a steep incline, find a rope, tie a rope**
**and edge your way gently down.**

**You were told to make bread, give a loaf away**
**and you might never go hungry.**
**And even if you do go hungry, then hunger**
**is the season you are called to endure.**

**You asked for light at the end of the tunnel**
**and was told**
**six more days, then seven - open sail -**
**eventually the wind will wake, spare you**
**the cause of your consuming dread.**

********

*(Four Heads of Evil Within and Without –*
*Resentment; Bitterness; Self-pity; Self-aggrandizement)*

**Revival**

**Be still, in the hostile landscape, be still,**
**find provision, refuse the fear.**
**Firmly self-sufficient, valuing your**
**success measured by fulfilment of God's commands**
**and the sweet exchange of eternal experiences.**
**Is there anything to regret? No,**
**there is only what must be given up**
**- self-pity - the grotesque body**
**that grew beside your own, grew because**
**of your suffering, a deformity that**
**grew to help you carry the weight of that suffering,**
**a deformity that held a place for your secret pride.**

**But now, unbound, you must mercy-kill it,**
**release and dissolve its surface layers and under-layers.**
**It is always in a state of perpetual decay, supporting.**
**Release the poltergeist apparition,**
**re-distribute your cells, align**
**without its sickly features haunting and its whisperings**
**that lead to madness, whispering**
**"This suffering is yours. How amazing you are to carry it!"**
**and "No one will love you if you don't carry it."**

**Be loved in your joy and crazy impulses,**
**your sinews riveting creative overflow.**
**Be bouncing, impossible, wrenched from its illusion,**
**off your leash, off your rocker.**

**Discover dignity under the high trees,**
**by the rapids, skipping stones,**
**stepping on the slippery rocks,**
**stepping closer to the thrashing contours,**
**closer yet to its elemental song.**

***

*(Awaiting Impact)*

**Calling In**

**If you see the daybreak**
**but cannot walk out of the cave,**
**if you are still feasting on small beetles and cave-moss**
**instead of apples and mushrooms, how far really**
**does your sight go? Far, winning yourself**
**a legacy but not far enough to be more than**
**a story told.**

**How do you collect the emptiness and make a stone,**
**a salvation, carved with a celestial roof and sturdy ground?**

**Beg for movement - ask to drink from the cup today -**
**to perch on the hillside, walk down**
**the hillside and greet the blessing**
**like an open-hearted child, running**
**full speed into your arms.**

**Take more than symbols, signs, tarot and spells.**
**Lick the forehead of love, taste the salt**
**on your tongue, gently covering folds and creases.**
**Stay in the glory, tangible, building, connecting.**

**The deck is clear. Hatch the egg.**
**Search the upper rooms,**
**carry your bed to the second floor, welcome in**
**the seductive sweetness, invite it to climb your steps.**
**First, shedding its secrets, single in its carnal commitment.**
**Then, feeding your body with its gravity and resolve.**

**Part Two – Going Back to Let Go**

*******

***(learning the lesson of Lot's wife)***

**Their bed, Your body**

**Rocking under the blade,**
**not touching, almost touching but not.**
**Walking into the savage yard, where**
**decaying soulless wanderers**
**crowd the space and drink misery instead of water.**

**Passing through the yard,**
**closing the gate, never to return.**

**It is a dark enchantment - behind you, bolted,**
**enclosed. No price high enough could steady**
**their ravenous hunger, no sacrifice given to save them**
**was ever even noticed.**

**They will keep wandering**
**in the dead-zone where no mercy**
**can reach them.**

**That garden is a place where connection**
**to God has been willfully severed, where souls**
**have dissolved into wisps of ghostly fever, ungraspable,**
**doomed to the storeroom, to the torment tangibly pouring out**
**of guilt, shame, and outrage born from self pity.**
**Pity them, then move on.**

**They are full of secrets, unwashed undergarments**
**and dusty overcoats, cramped with illness.**
**Your hands cannot be a shield,**
**their shadowy substance will seep through your pores.**
**All that can be done is to**
**hold hands with Jesus,**
**commit to run with Jesus. Make this choice,**
**and watch the swallows circle their nests,**
**watch the leveling sun**
**as all good possibilities expand.**

**And you, reborn by this choice,**
**having shed yourself of their torment,**
**can rub yourself with lavender,**
**manifest your eternal potential,**
**stepping into the wave, becoming the wave**
**at one with such power,**
**all directions in rhythm, forward.**

*******

*(see with both eyes)*

**When Dust Covers the Sacred**

**Time is hard on the dream.**

**The dream, once sharp bold lines**
**becomes an untidy room - clothes behind**
**the bed, food crumbs hidden in corners.**
**For this exchange there is maturity,**
**the binding up of existence with the inexplicable,**
**the terrible and the flaccid.**

**The dangerous duty, the succubus of worry**
**and then the bitter beast that grows a head beside**
**your own…in youth, it is easy to imagine the**
**chaos cleaned, ordered like the many houses of heaven,**
**but after the fruit has long ago been picked**
**and there is nothing left to eat, your body changes**
**to find fuel in air like the baleen whales,**
**sucking in, filtering out, tiny nourishment,**
**trying to maintain fat stores, energy**
**for movement and a steadier type of strength**
**that only needs the air for answers,**
**breaking down the barriers of the dream,**
**letting in influences once firmly barred, letting down**
**the unsolved puzzles, picking up a housecoat and**
**relaxing.**

**The dream then becomes everything - tasks,**
**small gestures of love, like hugging your grown children,**
**feeding hazelnuts to squirrels**
**or watching your lover dance, carefree.**

**The dream is a small thing,**
**creeps up behind you like an unexpected neck rub,**
**cultivates in increments, holds its best power**
**when unattended, yielding to the unconscious flow,**
**crushing the big-dream-treasure into an edible form.**

***

*(the more love given,*
*the more meaning received)*

**Sink the Cup**

**Ignited, set afloat upon a great ocean.**
**And although the life below the surface is foreign**
**it is drawn from the one source, and not-so-foreign**
**at the core.**
**Speak up upon that burning boat-pyre, drain your cup,**
**release your shock and anger into a spoken-aloud prayer.**
**They will come, the angels of the sea -**
**humpbacks, octopi, porpoises and silver bright fish -**
**from the dimensional platforms of subcutaneous depths**
**they will rise with conviction, intimate**
**as the heat that encroaches and the flames reaching,**
**determined to transform your flesh into ash.**
**Leap into their fins and tentacle arms.**
**They too are sacred and able to offer deliverance.**
**Forget the land and land creatures**
**with air pocket lungs and the need for direct sunlight.**
**These water creatures will work magic**
**and make you one with their own, so when the fire arrives**
**it will have no sovereignty over**
**your plumped-up water-bearing body.**
**Go under, down inside a world without fire,**
**take your cup, where the weight and pressure**
**of the depths is enough justice to bear.**
**Get close to the Earth's centre, find a soft place at the bottom.**
**Remember to love everything that goes by -**
**the eyeless and the ugly, those that creep and those that glow.**

**Here your cup will be unnecessary,**
**but even so, here, it will remain always full.**

**Part Three – Why Not?**

*******

***(The Poet is not there to save you***
***The Poet is you)***

**Why not?**

**Why not**
**a sphere,**
**a monstrous breakthrough**
**breaking through the sphere**
**creating a gale, a flash, uncovering**
**a raging realm of heaven before**
**unknown?**

**Why not the mountain**
**that was both shield and finish line**
**dissolved into the flossy ocean-sand**
**particles, sinking, dispersing over the vast**
**salt-saturated floor?**

**Why not love strong as a flock of geese**
**blazing a dark pattern over blue, or love**
**like a cave, deep underground where a ready-made**
**meal is found?**

**Why not the backbone**
**that was believed as backbone**
**a chunky armour removed,**
**and the hand coming in, pliant and warm,**
**finding skin and muscles rounded, pushing**
**into true intimacy?**
**Why not the heart a fish**
**with a coin in its mouth?**
**The warrior, now a mother and still**
**the same?**

**Why not a steady supply of nourishment,**
**everything found when needed, everything given**
**when asked?**

**Why not the gathered yarn, the knitted**
**sweaters?**

**Why not**
**the person on the bus sitting**
**in a suffering madness, just his eyes**
**looking down, teaching you**
**the unburnished treasure within**
**- compassion -**
**seasoned, for you, the world and all?**

***

*(a miracle witnessed)*

**Not a Dream**

**It will seem like a dream,**
**blanketing your shackles in light**
**until they vanish like a passing breath of**
**wind.**

**You will walk**
**and the iron gate will be unlocked and open.**
**At the intersection**
**you will know it is not a dream,**
**but a beautiful reckoning, a reconciliation**
**between reality and ideals.**

**What you value and keep,**
**and what you hand over**
**will equal in authority.**
**You will be escorted onto the path**
**in spite of practical obstacles.**
**In spite of the guarded prison cell,**
**your freedom will arrive,**
**gloriously and easefully.**
**You will get dressed and follow.**

**This is not a dream. There will be no blood spilt**
**to ensure your release. It will feel like a dream.**
**What you commit to will be your lead and your tether.**
**The shadow of tormented suffering will**
**be waved away by the angel's magnificent hand.**

**The way will be cleared**
**and tomorrow**
**you will be rejoicing, opened,**
**remaining open.**

**Part Four – Coming Home**

*******

***(kenneled in four sterile walls,***
***dig until your roots are exposed, weeping)***

**Forgiveness is Freedom**

**You open the door**
**knowing that light is mercy**
**and mercy is light.**
**Piece-by-piece has shifted**
**to the whole, split off**
**from attachment to personal sin,**
**from ego encased around your karma**
**that holds you pressed to it, believing in it,**
**living inside its loop like an unquestioned tradition.**

**You open the door and let go**
**of your individual inheritance**
**to know a flow between**
**yourself and heaven, without ritual**
**as catalyst, only God's love**
**as completion, only**
**Jesus's gift of utter anarchy.**

**Letting go of repetitive spiritual duties**
**that chip away at the rock because the song is sung**

**“There is no rock!” It has vanished, the burden**
**of blood and ancestry removed:**
**forgiveness in the depths,**
**freedom at the starting line.**

*******

*(Interval of agony, elapsed)*

**The Answer**

**We must be a potion**
**mixed. Alone we have**
**potency and purpose still,**
**but combined is the breakthrough**
**explosion, the cry of light that**
**will grind heaven into sparkling**
**dust we can bathe our bodies in.**
**Let's bathe, hand in hand, limb over limb,**
**relax in shimmering warm waters.**

**The guilt that was yours,**
**guilt for feeling responsible for choices**
**that were not yours, exorcise it,**
**burn that haunted palace down and construct**
**a new hut where we can live and make**
**a clean home in, pure from ghosts**
**and the blood bonds of false ownership.**

**I see you alive and blazing,**
**your chained foot unchained**
**and the sun warming your back.**
**I see you with two hands working their strength,**
**kneading this sick world with your voice**
**so strong it will spawn revelations, shape**
**spiritual fires, ladders from lightning bolts, splitting**
**the wheat from the chaff.**

**Be honoured you were chosen for this task.**
**How could you record it if you didn't live it,**
**if you didn't suck in the last**
**of its shame and suffering threshold,**
**choke on its dry and brittle pieces of bone?**
**So suck it in, take it into your bleeding esophagus,**
**then watch it dissolve, its frayed and familiar howling**
**vanished into a new-found brightness.**

**We must climb the high wall together.**
**Us, as one, or not at all.**
**That is the commitment of our marriage**
**- spit and gore, glory and bond -**

**Eccentric dancers, fierce creators,**
**our shoulders as swords slicing the pie,**
**casting off this second mortality,**
**together, breaking the wind in two,**
**being born in the space between, landed.**

# Illusions Burned, Radiant Light Restored

## Part 1 - Exiled into a Ruthless Land

**Time without becoming**

*******

**It won't work.**
**You thought it would work, but it won't.**
**Clutched jaw, vermin making nests**
**in your gut, melted silver pouring**
**over your extremities, hot-plate**
**your whole hand must rest upon.**
**And here, you are supposed to find peace,**
**but you can't. You can't even glance**
**at that inhospitable land, can't even step**
**a toe into its puddle of spittle without sinking,**
**leaves you**
**like a mad crow cawing aimlessly here, there**
**across the sky.**
**Stones here, fish there, people moving,**
**going where they want to, and you, stuck, perpetually,**
**feet locked in the mire - misquotes buzzing,**
**barely a light across the moor.**
**You hoped it would work. You believed,**
**and in that belief, you touched happiness**
**for weeks, woke up thinking this hell**
**was wrapped and sealed, that your freedom**
**could be activated and somehow**
**a great merciful tide would come**
**and clear a path.**

**But now you know it won't work.**
**Now you know who you are,**
**a broken umbrella that won't work.**
**Fated to feel the impossible tension**
**of who you are and who you wish you could be.**
**The birds are somebodies. Each tiny sparrow,**
**worth embracing. You wish you held value**
**like the sparrow or even a cloud**
**that for a moment**
**gives relief from a relentless sun.**
**You wish you could carry this weight**
**a little longer. But both your arms are broken.**
**Your heart too.**

*******

**A greater force or just**
**this dull aching horror of**
**no-truth, no-connection**
**just the pound pound plaster-cast-mould**
**of what could-be, used-to-be, never-really-was.**

**Make me a hole big enough to escape from,**
**to join the flight of burning gods, retreating like they did,**
**into myth-oblivion. Pull the seasons from my mind,**
**memories when I thought love would sustain,**
**maintain its potency in spite of age,**
**desolation and disappointment.**

**Every ideal I held sacred has crumbled,**
**bread crumbs now,**
**smaller than pebble stones scattered on patio steps,**
**never existing at all.**

**I am a placeholder substitute there to feed,**
**provide shelter but never home.**
**I am blind, unchallenged, beyond the limit for redemption.**

**I am fighting the sea and the sea does not panic,**
**lives within**
**its own self-directed rhythm.**

**The sea's flesh is stronger than my marrow, than a war-cry,**
**than the binding-ties of loved ones lost and buried.**
**The sea will receive me, not because I am special,**
**but because that is what it does.**

**My fight is fire, but only mortal, and the sea**
**has my body, fills my pores and lungs,**
**takes me below.**

*******

**This is the voice**
**that heralds and hardens,**
**sunk, elusive**
**far from any shore.**

**Colours, saturated with salt,**
**whose better business is taken up**
**and bloated, dulled of any identity.**

**This is the rhythm,**
**once so exact and necessary,**
**fallen below, muffled, interrupted,**
**spliced into unrecognizable dead forms.**

**This is the time spent**
**answering a calling, a duty**
**of divine command, slack now**
**as a pierced jellyfish,**
**abstract enough to be ignored.**

**This is the voice**
**that burst forth from my fire,**
**moved with violence into the light,**
**showed wings, a detailed face,**
**survival's thundering veins.**

**This is the voice**
**I thought would crack the sun a little,**
**crack the mind to let leak in**
**a delicious deepened dimension.**

**I risked a destiny but failed to germinate.**
**Now I take up my luggage and wander the streets**
**with that voice,**

**claiming revenge in aggressive madness,**
**(a quiet vapour only**
**when children pass by.)**

*******

**Tid-bits, burnt toast, is that the substance**
**of intensity or is brave conviction**
**only recognized in another world**
**or in heaven?**

**But heaven will not have me,**
**no matter how hard I swing it - heaven stays**
**a meditation mirage, a glimpse taken in,**
**taking me down,**
**not worth a fraction of the effort**
**I put into vaulting for peace.**

**Failed as a sunrise over a prison cell in dungeon ground.**
**Failed as condolences to the bereaved, or a sandwich**
**made, placed in the hands of the dying.**

**I took a step and crushed a flower.**
**I covered myself with blankets and lost**
**the willpower to breathe.**

**Truck overloaded with debris**
**driving straight toward me.**
**I should leap onto safe ground,**
**but there are high cliffs on either side.**
**I should lie flat and hope the wheels go between,**
**not crush my ribs, my femur, my pinky toe.**

**How can I welcome the spring?**
**What should I do?**
**Over and over the cut hand**
**escaping the hold, briefly,**
**then back, barred and shackled**
**by fool's gold.**

## Part 2 – Defeat Masked as Acceptance

### Blossoms That Resist Their Bloom

***

**Dashed against**
**the sidewalk curb,**
**opened up, cracked into**
**pieces. No sooner**
**the storm rains came and**
**washed me down the sewer drain**
**into pipes I'd rather not go.**
**But who lives here, in the invalid waters?**
**Creatures thriving on the potent scent and grim.**
**Creatures with their own rapport, societies, and even love.**
**I will be the necklace you wear in the dim corner.**
**You keep saying one step one step, and**
**I will keep afloat in this sewage substance,**
**to not settle among the other mutations,**
**subjections – the great bowing down.**
**But remember, once I was a ruler,**
**doling out punishments and gifts upon**
**my erratic whims.**
**Once I cramped my mind with violence,**
**brooded on the sliced-throat of revenge.**
**That is why I am here,**
**backside floating in watered-down excrement,**
**barred between metal pipe walls.**

**If mercy is available, I will take it.**
**If not, like you said, one step, one step.**

**Cherry dreams are Cherry dreams.**
**Courage when cornered**
**is more.**

*******

**Biting the marrow**
**of obscurity, planting my wisdom**
**in plastic pots - passages I conquered,**
**steps I took, cut through the dreamy level**
**into the ruthless underbelly formations**
**tainted, untainted complexities,**

**but only**
**trite verbiage gets attention and eternity is**
**sucked into a keyhole darkness.**
**Lightweight riders riding,**
**applauding the trickle made from accidental saliva,**
**giving credence to feel-good epigrams, lacking in literature**
**and monumental sway.**

**God said paint, so I painted. God said break, so**
**I broke – the canvas, my heart and sanity.**
**Starving in the shadowland, frozen, cast out**
**in the middle of a dead lake.**

**Fire is a world of two masters. In its light**
**there is a reunion of acts, a sealed equal pact**
**between purification and destruction.**

**My roots are strong, no doubt, I have grown**
**high and thick-trunked, gathering greenery, but**
**in an empty field, empty of roads and wildlife,**
**empty of a steady stream.**

*******

**The dark part**
**The lost part**
**the found-again not-wanted part**
**has arrived like a package at my door.**

**Purgatory leaning to pick it up, shake it up**
**and take scissors to the outline.**
**Inside is a mask made of fish-skin**
**containing a nameless vibration,**
**an unshifting necessity to put on, wear**
**and fit in.**

**I want to dispose of it, crush it then**
**rip it into tiny pieces, drop it down a sewer grate**
**far far from my home – maybe even take a bus**
**to another city and leave it there,**
**deep underground where no trace of it remains.**

**The tormenting part**
**The hard-concrete-wet-prison-floor part**
**The chained-to-the-wall part**
**is again, at my door.**

**It is noon hour and I still haven't**
**put it on, as its stench dulls my appetite,**
**is really too much to bear, but I must put it on.**

**When I know the exit sign was just a mirage**
**how will I hold up now?**
**Silent in its deathless domain?**
**Silent in this unending anguish?**

**When hope is gone but faith remains,**
**in this place, miracles dare to bloom.**

**The wrong part**
**is the right part**
**because it is playing a part**

**I will wear its acid peel, place its flesh**
**over my own face, wear the mask**
**hurting as I do, then**
**I will hold out my hands,**
**expecting, to heaven.**

## Part 3 - The Wound is the Answer

### The Flow of Matter

***

**Take the light,**
**Lose the light,**
**racing across a panicked terrain.**
**Fear is a sloping hill mudslide.**

**You pierced the earth with your stick,**
**left it there, left running, thinking**
**your speed would catch on fire, seed**
**growth on dead ground, meaning more**
**than just thoughts impaled in your mind.**

**The stick stayed. It is still there, far from**
**where your limping dreams have finally arrested.**

**Release the burden of trying.**
**You have lost. This stone wall.**
**This patch of yellowed grass and the brutal**
**whirlwind all around – this is yours.**
**Make something of it.**
**Take the time, because you have that too.**

**Dissolve your belief of a mission**
**up into the rays of the giving sun.**
**There is no light different than the darkness.**
**Feel it flashing, flashing far away, rising,**
**broad shoulders, furrowed brow**
**yell it out one last time**
**then surrender.**

*******

**Standing in the dark bend**
**of a wanderer's insight where**
**neither solitude nor the life beneath**
**the great seas will do.**

**Which dead body do you keep? Salting**
**wounds for the sake of enlightenment,**
**framed with things you cannot glory in**
**even for a time.**

**It is nature and it is**
**a passing motion.**
**You will mourn its starving carcass**
**for you know nowhere else to rest**
**your heart and eyes.**

**Stand by the fires of liberation,**
**join inspiration with accomplishment.**
**The word is NO and it is mighty and reasonable.**
**None of this is a problem, even the dread**
**that spreads like maggots above your abdomen**
**in your leisure time, in your working-in-chains time,**
**all the time, surprising you with its intensity**
**and burrowing, burrowing.**

**Hold your lips tight, buckle up, straight away be**
**God's soldier, holding acceptance as**
**your sword.**

**You are not impotent, You are just**
**one reality. Think slowly. Your life is not yours**
**to keep. Feeling abandoned or belonging is**

**just a stirring up agitation – water, moon, desert wind.**
**Nothing is missing.**

**Where you are broken,**
**the light steps, is captured and glows**
**the most colourful where it is fractured.**

**It is your fingerprint in holy bloom.**

*******

**It might be a ritual dance, a memory of walls**
**and the dew collecting on steel window bars,**
**but it is also a fossil you have gilded to your soul,**
**a door keeping you in this room, incarcerated,**
**white-knuckled and bawling.**

**You think you deserve it, that many lifetimes ago,**
**before the monastery, you did deeds**
**you would now wither from,**
**your now vegetarian soul, conscious**
**when you see slabs of cut-up carcasses**
**in the grocery store, conscious**
**of the torture and fear endured.**

**But you deserve only the wind your prayers**
**are carried on, only the smiles of your grown-up children**
**and your husband, happy beside you,**
**his sail full mast.**

**That place where the stagnant prison waters stank**
**and your feet developed unhealable sores,**
**is over, not even a rope nor an army**
**could carry you across**
**into a sunlit field.**

**Part of you is still there,**
**living out the punishment daily, toiling**
**in angry futility, tied to a tombstone with vultures**
**gathered around.**

**Wax yourself unhooked. The animals love you:**

**The mother bird feeds her young**
**right above your head, knowing**
**you are safe, joined to the psychic link.**

## Part 4 – Between Notes, An Interval of Peace

**Where The Rays of the Sun Are Blocked**
**They Rest, Then Warm**

*******

**In the summer your wore**
**your loose clothes.**

**In the winter, your layered yourself**
**in velvet.**

**It is spring and the ships**
**are setting out under a spring sky.**

**Take the time to wash your stone wall,**
**chip out a window, keep chipping and soon**
**it will be large enough for you to slip through.**

**The dark grammar is deepening, but so**
**you have made a choice to break neck-to-neck**
**with the soothsayers of doom, then to surpass them,**
**turn down an unleveled path and make true headway.**

**The rain will come, the stormy thunder**
**and the wind, but you have earned yourself**
**the skill of withstanding.**
**The parameters are bleeding through and your house**
**for now is happy.**
**Take a second to be grateful:**

**Immortality is only that –**
**a moment in full recognition**
**of the harmony innate in eternity**
**and the conscious love that beads**
**such perfection.**

**In the fall, you put away the bird feeders.**
**It is spring and still the birds are singing.**
**They survived and their singing**
**brings you joy.**

*******

**Changing gears in the long-held-note**
**of the lion's roar,**
**summoning**
**a way forward that does not jar**
**against your sacred values**
**or block the energy up or down, in**
**a stagnant pool of algae larvae-laid waters.**

**Take a hand and listen - there is still glory**
**to be found, a tent to build, a tree to climb.**

**Take what is untouched and touch it, craft it**
**like spores on the moon,**
**or team-spirit high-five it**
**in the bleachers.**

**Right now, what is not narrow is too wide**
**and barren, a place where even a young horse**
**would get tired racing across.**
**You were supposed to have passed this place by now,**
**or so you dreamed. You have only rough-cuts on your screen,**
**shapes like phantoms, hardly visible.**

**Inside, you are always tired.**
**Are you dying like you did in another lifetime**
**from a blood disease, alone in a room?**

**Or are you going**
**somewhere else this time,**
**coming to your senses, full gear,**
**a master of your circumstance, finally, ablaze?**

*******

**The order of things was simplified,**
**silence ensued and questions left you**
**folded under the Buddha-wing.**
**Times in the shower when you heard and learned**
**the worries of the day were enough,**
**that there never were graphics or translations,**
**but only the raw-hewed truth**
**that flamed forth its music and love**
**without peculiarity, pure, in charge of**
**everything living, there**

**you felt yourself a queen in the lap pool**
**doing dives, and finding your coronation party**
**full of only wanted guests.**
**In this calm, you lost an onslaught of examples,**
**but held playtime as fair-time, power-of-the-spirit-time**
**occupying the four corners of the shower**
**and all the dimensions too.**

**Windows became houses became homes, places**
**of enactment, concentrated love and many broken**
**unfixable edges where the greatest fault**
**was always indifference as default to giving up.**

**The order of things was reduced**
**to a straight and infinite line.**
**Excess was swept away**
**and a breezy sobering became elemental,**
**austerity, soft as kindness.**

*******

**Speaking, overlapping**
**a fighter's field, then a gate to**
**squeeze through, mark your territory**
**on the other side.**

**A summer on the other side**
**where you could will all rounds, drop**
**your shield and summon in the wildlife.**

**Mornings there to ruminate,**
**cultivate your calling to reach**
**an undiscovered octave,**
**craving the centre of the storm**
**and knowing it**
**like your morning shower.**

**Friends are far or going into surgery wards**
**to hunt down a destiny.**
**Family is fractured, engraving**
**your failures centre-wall.**

**You see a driver shouting**
**at a mellow pedestrian**
**and a bronze statue tumbling over**
**in a flood.**

**You run to the gate and it is barred tight, not a crack**
**to slip a finger through. Above, it is different.**

**Do not miss the chance,**
**Slaughter your past**
**and even your accent.**

**Leap up into the tornado wind and spin-sail**
**out of your mortal sleep, bone-picked, out in the open,**
**looking at, loving, the first moon ever.**

## Part 5 - There Will Be Movement

### Commitment In The Unending Desert

***

**In case you don't turn**
**but monotony pursues you**
**like a patient wild cat or**
**your fondest dream realized**
**has left you tight with dread - then be**
**the Buddha-master in the folded**
**seams, be the highrise apartment**
**looking down**
**and eat bread, sip your tea.**

**In case it will always be a matter of**
**just-getting-through, and stress and guilt**
**flank either side of your relief, linking arms,**

**then remember Jesus and his words**
**about the wind, smile at the expectant animals, find love**
**in the broken and bent, remember angels exist and God is**
**neither cunning nor withholding, but always available.**
**Be available too, open as a crumbled dam, open as**
**the first smells of spring.**

**Vivid days waiting to watch the eclipse.**
**The hawk has circled, telling you it is coming,**
**but in case it doesn't, salvation is within, tied**
**to your own commitment, tied to the upstairs rooms**

**each filled with a sleeping loved one, each closest to your heart.**

*******

**The light came like light does**
**illuminating the clawing hand,**
**stretching taut the slack conviction.**

**It brought to the surface the groaning ache**
**of anxiety, making fingertips quiver and**
**their pulse beat in unnatural speed.**

**The light exposed the tender spot,**
**the bandaged maul,**
**merciless in its thorough claim.**

**After that, the body was done, the full moon waned**
**and ideals carried the weight of serious difficulties,**
**no longer racing full charge.**

**You walked with such exposure,**
**and learned how to surrender, dissolve**
**your fears into the light.**

**Many times it was that way,**
**necessary to make the decision**
**to release your load**
**otherwise you would sink –**
**until you stood bare beneath the sky,**
**resources and water tipped over the side –**

**just you now and that light,**
**not even time traded spaces with it,**
**not death or the grief of memories.**
**The light came and did what light does.**

**Can you hear its vibrational hum,**
**burning all the flash cards, all the pyramid-glory?**

**Patterns that were once grafted to your biology,**
**patterns that defined you, patterns that after the light**
**are unearthed, have nowhere to belong.**

*******

**Dreamer, don't forget to dream,**
**or forget your gleaming split fire**
**masquerading as normalcy**
**lost in everyday bravery, getting things done**
**in range of the pawn shop and the dentist, shopping**
**for fruit, all the while a thousand yards above**
**the streetwalk curb, seeing shadows of celestial**
**beings overlap on the pavement,**
**dense in their other-dimensional realm.**

**You vault off their cloud, into a place without clouds,**
**your mind a keeper of their language,**
**draped in dread one moment, the next, exploding**
**in effervescent kaleidoscope floral bands**
**feeling anxiety like thunder, touching rocks**
**like touching flesh**

**charged by the child skipping, the tied-up dog.**
**The estates are weeping wine, and the ships are loaded**
**with fat-stores racing past starving islands.**

**You don't know how to live.**
**You don't know one good day.**

**Is it a wound or is it a vision,**
**roughed-in displays of immortality**
**blooming, longing**
**for a lasting harvest?**

*******

**Sturdy spirit**
**in pure afterglow,**
**voyage with me**
**with your wealth and force,**
**past the Earth's mantel into**
**the inner core.**

**Never reckless but blinded**
**by refined instincts unified.**
**Activity without labour.**
**Joy with no reflection.**

**In the thick undergrowth**
**slide through the parameter,**
**making yourself a master**
**who faces everything as though**
**it was the first time.**

**Take the ring and turn:**
**Commitment in eternal flow.**
**Love at last on salty lips,**
**heralding in**
**a devouring release.**

**Smells of spring**
**Smells of water**
**No gear, no ribbons**
**of glory**

**for**
**this is glory,**
**and whatever else is**
**pales beside this bouquet of our origins,**
**sweet quaking, last-call fulfilment.**

*******

**Washed clean,**
**washed your garments**
**under your garments**
**triumphant with truth.**
**You lifted your mask, opened your mouth**
**and let your tongue be exposed.**

**Pent-up, brewing a seizure**
**under your skin.**
**The graveyard has re-absorbed its corpses.**
**The paintings on the walls**
**are breathing again.**
**Boat-sailing at sunrise,**
**entranced by the possibilities imagination allows.**
**O breath – colourful anomalies!**
**This is your place, fortified by authenticity.**
**The grass is finally growing,**
**the fires are wooed and contained.**
**You love this joy, your house without a lock-chain.**
**You love your freedom and your secrets.**
**You spread out, your roots have joined,**
**entwined, singular.**

*******

**Landscapes stirred, hot coal,**
**hotter in the blue flame.**
**Summer walks terrible into your yard,**
**but the wind is in the lead and you will ask for**
**a multitude of blessings, believing.**

**You will die in the change and shape yourself**
**a new achievement. You will be diligent,**
**canceling old thoughts, creating new thoughts**
**that snuff out the physical dread of doom that infiltrate**
**like poison a flower's soft pores.**

**You will go to where love goes, following,**
**healed of all affliction, even death, by faith,**
**no longer a pawn of desperately doing**
**to hold yourself a little closer to God.**

**When you see, you are still,**
**disrobed of your past,**
**anchored in the burn of being.**

**When you feel, you feel**
**his hand reaching out, lifting you out**
**when your faith has faltered,**
**you feel**
**his affectionate mercy, love, receiving, covering your sins**
**as the only absolution, and then you feel his sorrow,**
**are in awe of his obedience, in spite of such sorrow.**

**When you know, you know**
**miracles are right as home is,**
**are the result of stepping into the current, aligned.**

**When you know, you know**
**Jesus is radical, never easy -**
**demands alertness and surrender,**
**devotion and doing combined,**
**offers one slot, one string, thin but unbreakable -**
**rhythm blessed, rhythm revolutionized.**

*******

**Into the nonsense depths**
**of plywood and pull**
**where fairness is the fallacy seen**
**as it always was and courage builds**
**like a patio – one stone at a time.**

**If you mount the depths and let yourself**
**go, it will be love you fall into and also**
**heartache from this gutsy deed. You will find**
**whiplash, and also warmth**

**but mostly**
**you will be living, not driving, but whirled away**
**by the wind, free of dust and accumulation**
**of monotonous gestures. You will go**
**and give the best of yourself,**
**another light lit to rage in the corner of your room,**
**strong in promise but still unsure.**

**leap**
**into the place your worldly wisdom tells you**
**not to go, but you know if you don't leap**
**you might as well grow up,**
**assent to the rotting ways and coveted fears around you,**
**you might as well start picking your plot and throw out**
**the calendar for all your days forward will be the same**
**one after another.**

**You know the centre is wide, let it widen even more.**
**See the centre point as mercy.**
**There is fear in this new possibility of joy.**
**There are many 'what ifs?"**

**Trade your coat for naked skin.**
**Your gift-risk is finally here.**

**Hold it, caress it, honour it, feed it everything**
**it needs, and leap.**

## Part 6 – Only The Wind

### Only The Way

***

**Caked in the crusted past,**
**spoonfed a dilemma you cannot**
**escape from and is bound to take you down**
**while clawing for freedom.**

**But there is glory**
**in the mountain's ridge, glory**
**in the sewer tunnels and in the medicine you take**
**to kill the gnawing pain – head stretched into a whiff**
**of rust-dust, bolted in place, but cracking.**

**This is your name, your life today, not in an imagined**
**tomorrow. Feed the small creatures if you can.**
**If you cannot, remember a time when you did, and know**
**that moment is still going on, like all moments,**
**sphere-held, mighty and forever –**

**so be kind**
**and be ready to change at full strength, for the sky**
**is churning, you cannot see it, but every moment**
**is giving you a new pattern to play with.**

**Hold your breath, keep holding, solid in this treachery,**
**revolt against your own perspective,**
**break your debts and all your days ahead**
**hard against an open window**

*******

**Bind the ghost**
**to the earth, touch**
**the covers and pull**
**out a song, a whisper**
**of forgiveness. Anchored**
**in sensual currents,**
**holding hands, thighs**
**and perfect movement.**

**Love, this is air, enough**
**to get you through**
**the skeleton forests of yesterday**
**and the milestone thicket thorns of**
**perceived tomorrows.**

**Still in the joy, fishing for coins, finding**
**coins, clean and glittering, pulled from**
**the bottom.**

**I love my love with the same purity**
**of our first gaze. I love my love, shedding our shadows,**
**merged in what is ours alone to know and keep.**

**We thought we were broken, but we are not.**
**Our fires have not wilted, but**
**have become arrows**
**- shot - one after another**
**beating on the river's surface, leaving a mark,**
**then sinking, traceless,**
**swallowed into the flow.**

*******

**You held me in the fog,**
**fearful I would find the fringe**
**and crack. I took up a broom.**
**You set down the broom and told me**
**to explore the pattern of dirt, find meaning**
**in its intricate vineyard, be a woman**
**of observation, great endurance and then of joy.**

**You warned me not to plunge into the reflection,**
**(bitterness brighter than the dubious sun)**
**but to hold conference with what was lacking,**
**sit in the open space, tie my shoes, brush my hair,**
**take stock of the vacancy and see**
**if by being still it gets smaller,**
**starts imploding, becomes a village of amoebas**
**that eventually turns into plants, then ants**
**and starlings, drinking at the bin.**

**You held me in the midnight iris**
**when my hope had hardened.**
**You told me don't even try to comfort the pain,**
**because by doing so, you only make it stronger,**
**locking it inseparable to your vitality.**

**I took the stairs, following.**
**I took a leap and honoured its design.**

**And you, you honoured that deed**
**and were pleased.**

## Part 7 – Arms Once Folded, Then Slack, Now Open

**Freedom By The Fires**

*******

**By the fires where you saw**
**the hunters' faces exposed,**
**the groaning darkness growing, encompassing**
**any trace of tender love, growing like**
**a foal into a stallion – strong, unstoppable,**
**full of wild fury.**

**The hunters promised to devour**
**every Elder tree, every animal that took shelter**
**in their green folds, and even the multi-colored insects,**
**keepers of the balance.**

**Then Jesus walked the Earth, offered the living waters**
**from a well, sprang from history, separated from**
**tradition, mores and the lock-step of rigid ritual.**

**Tearing at the sky, he folded its skin back to reveal**
**a new level of heaven unseen before.**
**Once this happened,**

**the hunters still ruled but now**
**there a way was to jump over their skilled spears,**
**a narrow way to redemption with no training wheels,**
**no handle bars.**

**The courage of complete surrender.**

**The hunters remain in the streetcars, in corner stores,**
**at the family table. But Jesus remains too,**
**a gift of God's greatest mercy**
**- the master scythe and the purifying balm -**

**wounds are lifted, all around the hunters,**
**children are dancing, lovers and old people too –**
**you see them,**

**followers of the wind,**
**nomad gatherers, receivers**
**of the charge.**

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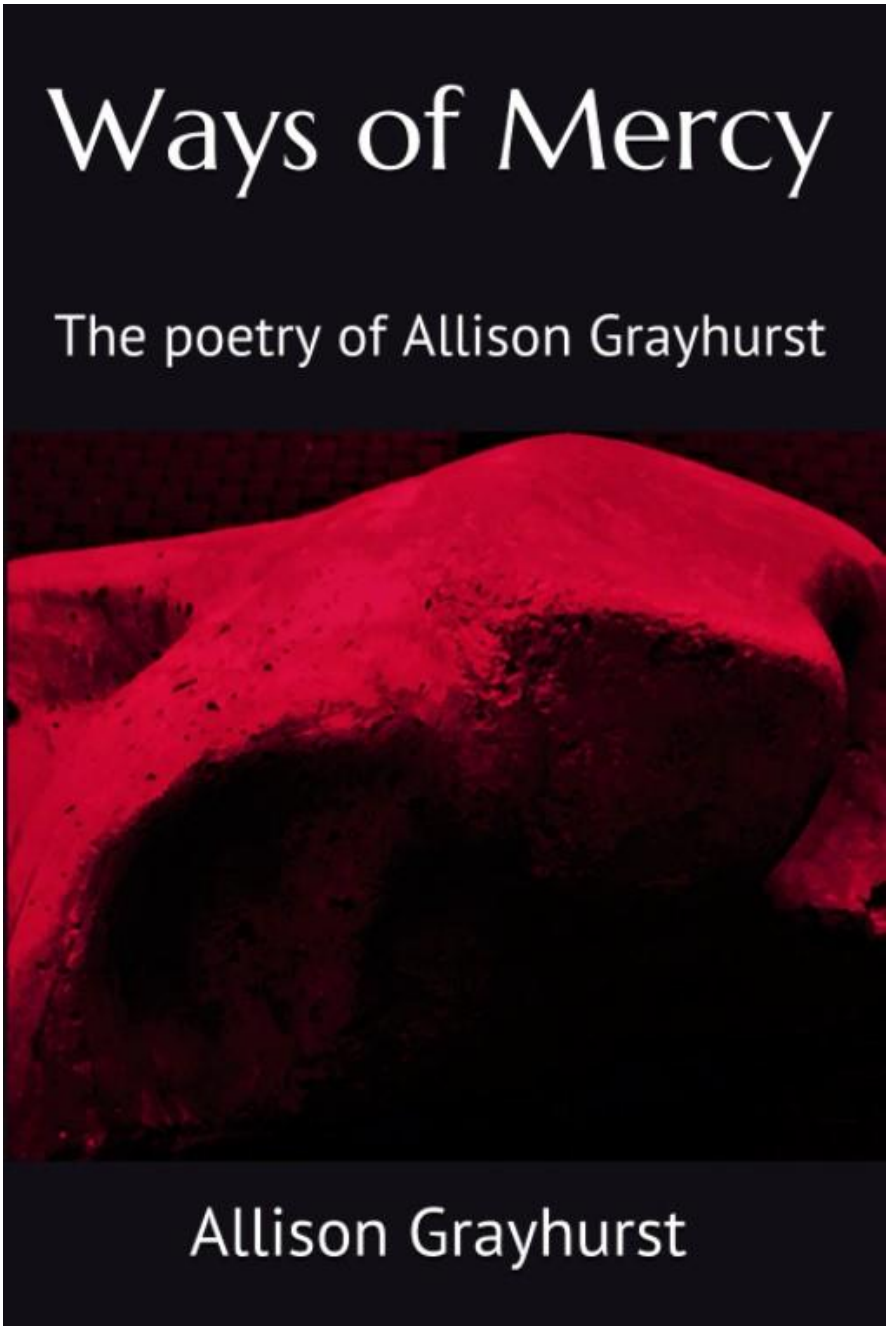
Ways of Mercy
The poetry of Allison Grayhurst
Allison Grayhurst

# *Ways of Mercy*

*Allison Grayhurst*

***Edge Unlimited Publishing***

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**Ways of Mercy**
**The poetry of Allison Grayhurst**
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# *Tadpoles Find the Sun*

# No Gods, no Heroes,
# only women and Hector

**The misdirected vengeance of Hera.**
**Grey-eyed Athena's wrath and jealousy,**
**and Dionysus, bringer of merciless punishment –**
**(feral mother ripping the limbs from her son, unknowingly,**
**but when awakened, an internal bonfire grief**
**beyond extinguishing.)**

**Hector was the only noble hero –**
**shouldering his course and obeying his love.**

**Crafty Odysseus tossed baby-Astyanax**
**from the towers of Troy.**
**Crazed Achilles knew only the fury of his passion as he**
**flooded Scamander with the cut-up corpses of his mad rage.**
**Ajax the Great impaled himself in service to his affronted ego,**
**and Ajax the Lesser – a coward rapist**
**of the prophet pure Cassandra.**

**Give me one-eyed blindness, stay on the path, past**
**Hecuba and her wild rivers of unfathomable suffering –**
**childless when once a mother of many,**
**Queen of an honoured realm.**

**Give me Electra over Hera with her young-woman's devotion**
**and subterranean heart, tied to a father that would have killed**
**her as he did sister-Iphigenia**
**on the pyre-offering of war, victory and fame.**

**Give me a settled glory – my God of Mercy**
**instead of candles, Jesus**
**instead of Apollo's thick sensuous thighs or golden curls,**
**demanding matricide of Orestes.**

**Give me Helen in her betrayal of red-haired Menelaus, Helen,**
**daughter of the Swan, lover of pretty-boy Paris, Helen,**
**mascot and scapegoat of war, but never the cause.**

**Give me Clytemnestra over Agamemnon, daughter**
**too of the Swan, bearer of a mother's authentic wound -**
**Iphigenia lost on the bloody rock**
**by obeyer-of-Zeus, mighty-father**
**Agamemnon's royal hand.**

**Zeus, kind only to sycophants,**
**Zeus, serial adulterer, user of woman,**
**sire of many children, lusting as the sunlight lusts**
**for Earth, to seep warmth into her crust**
**and heat up the whole of her surface,**
**demanding offspring life.**

**Give me Penelope over**
**teller-of-tall-tales, Cyclops-outwitter,**
**slaughter-of-suitors Odysseus.**
**Penelope, with her patient intelligence weaving,**
**unweaving, keeper of fidelity**
**for twenty years, holding her own**
**up against the plight of a woman's, even a Queen's,**
**accepted inequality.**

**Give me steadfast Antigone,**
**crowned by an ancestral curse,**
**champion of funeral rites,**
**brother's defender, daughter-guide,**
**caregiver of a doomed once-king,**
**embracing her savage fate with magnificence.**

**Give me poor Io, chased in her heifer-frame**
**from flat plains to cliff ridges**
**to Prometheus's cursed crucifixion to**
**finally a resting point in Egypt –**
**Poor Io, ancestor of the brute-blooded Hercules,**
**who claimed madness-by-Hera turned him**
**into a murderer of his wife and sons,**
**who was no Hector, only**
**undefeated.**

**Give me Andromache's zodiac-fingerprint,**
**for she held Hector inside the cavity of her loins,**
**and he loved her, and for a time, they both knew**
**happiness.**

## Because,

**Because there is a child,**
**there is infinity and grace**
**like a grape, crushed, filling the**
**senses – exotic abundance.**

**Because there is love between lovers**
**the broken shelf doesn't need replacing,**
**the pond can dry up and no one will lack fresh water.**

**Because a mother's love has no limits,**
**it stretches past darkness, obstacles,**
**remains fierce and tender at once.**
**She knows herself less important than that love and**
**all else perishes beside its glowing depths, worthless.**

**Because when others fail in love, God does not,**
**picks up the slack – gives promise like a shield or like**
**a bucket full of rainwater.**

**Out of chaos the primitive gods were born -**
**divinity separated to be comprehended, grasped loosely.**

**Because there is one God,**
**because there is Jesus – hands, feet –**
**the threshold of freedom in eternity.**

**Root yourself here. Tie the ribbon.**
**The ditch is now a road.**

**Because of mercy and forgiveness,**
**mercy as forgiveness,**
**we all have won.**

# Sand

**Kick the tree.**
**The tree is a bone**
**cut out from the Earth.**
**Jump on the pavement and crack**
**it with the force of your rage.**

**Withering is not an option,**
**white-knuckling it**
**at the hidden horizon is keeping**
**you alive.**
**But it is futile, an out-of-tune song**
**wrestling for a harmony it will never find.**

**Praise the shellfish, the moles underground.**
**A world of faith is forming on your tongue –**
**you can taste it, but it is not enough**
**to satiate.**

**Release desperation and the anger that follows.**
**Feeling imprisoned was your default position**
**when being shepherded into reality.**
**Now you are new like Adam and like Eve**
**you died in brutal increments**
**and in brutal increments**
**you are being reborn from time,**
**unlike Adam, unlike Eve.**

**The stream you see is a blessing. The wind**
**is all around, and sometimes when listening,**
**it is faraway instruction. Other times,**

**it topples you over from its reeling power and at that time**
**you know for certain God is God**
**and there are no substitutes or shortcuts**
**or sure-fire prophecies**
**that will ease the fear of unknowing.**

**There is just that wind that says**
**'Go here' 'Go there' and when there,**
**maps out**
**an unexpected direction.**

## Centre-Faith
## (while dreams swirl all-around)

**Soothsayers and seers and shamans**
**have children, have the same**
**rising and falling stars,**
**cannot say "This is truth"**
**"This will happen"**
**There is only God's voice in the now,**
**leading to the next step and only**
**that step until the voice comes again.**

**Even in times of constant accepted prophecies,**
**the intelligent threw their crystals,**
**took notes of the pattern**
**but balked at the interpreters.**
**Journeys to the Navel-stone were daily –**
**whore-kings and crushed-citizens**
**sacrificed animals and even slaughtered**
**their own offspring**
**on the advice they were told.**

**But God is one**
**and God is permanent**
**and us,**
**being tied to time,**
**are not privy to visions into the future, no vision exact –**
**we are all equally blind, and that blindness**
**is a gift that opens the door to faith,**

**free-falling in our days,**
**fortunes and misfortunes,**
**arms open to God's ways and grace,**
**open like a painter choosing his colours**
**like a poet, her words.**
**Open**
**ecstasy in the listening,**
**surrender in the execution,**
**gleaming, gloriously summoned**
**into immediacy, into an all-demanding**
**autonomy.**

# A Dream Suspended

**Sinking in the void, held by**
**nylon line and my eye sees nothing**
**but that void, cannot turn to the**
**sunny above or straight ahead to**
**the insect landscape and daffodils.**

**So the void spreads and sprawls, and then**
**starts to whisper – touching the shadow**
**to my skin, making promises**
**that haven't even begun their manifestation.**

**Visceral futility stronger than fear**
**as I dangle over that blank-space reality,**
**and there is pressure like living gravity pulling me,**
**tensing the hold, wanting me to snap**
**and plunge into pure nothingness,**
**become the state of vacancy, have no frame,**
**no barrier or beating pulse.**

**It is winning, I hear**
**the creaking**
**with even further taut suspension and**
**my weight grows, nearing that midnight twist.**

**A dream suspended that has my whole future in its hold.**
**So I call out for help like I have many times before.**

**Do I strike a match, pretending it is a star?**
**Hang like the tarot hangman over that dull and ruthless ache,**
**swing a little and I might feel the possibility of a breeze?**

**I dreamed myself untied and running, sometimes skipping, brimming with a joyous equilibrium.**

**I dreamed there was no void, only a place of still-time, a purgatorial interlude as I shift from this flow into another.**

# Light that came

**Light that came**
**from the unending grief -**
**black-hole of pity sphere,**
**riding, sucking in, swirling**
**doomed to perpetual collapse.**

**Light that came**
**from hours caught in madness,**
**thrashing in the ribbon-tied, lock-chain**
**shadow centre - vacuum plague, persistent**
**as a wild current and just as impersonal.**

**Light that came**
**and broke the shell,**
**reached in and lifted, lifted me out of**
**the drowning water. That light is**
**a cold mercy, a sharp sword as my only defence -**
**detach - slice the limb that offends and watch it**
**bleed with indifference.**

**Light that came**
**to a changeless darkness changed**
**everything once maimed**
**so it could walk again.**

**Light as a miracle, whispered -**
**don't give hell power,**
**separate yourself, cage it,**
**and when you feel ready,**
**kiss its forehead, sing it a song**
**- lullaby, lullaby.**

# Glory, believe

**Glory, believe**
**the evidence is clear,**
**brought to a boil and**
**now boiling over.**

**World molested by greed,**
**indifference and distraction.**
**The pitch has elevated to burst**
**the eardrums. Scavengers are**
**scavenging and nothing is left.**
**Old ranks topple, protection is**
**a thin veil, fear overcomes prayers,**
**prayers that kept us sane.**

**Children and animals**
**are the new Earth's aristocracy,**
**Bless this time of turmoil - setting**
**everything upside down, right side up.**

**Jesus still walks the barren roads,**
**sandals in one hand,**
**at ease with whatever is to come.**

**Let me walk - a servant**
**yet absolutely free to not serve.**
**Let me make an oath to the celestial night,**
**an oath to replace panic with faith and**
**uncertainty with light everlasting.**

**I see the light everlasting,**
**the wheel that is not a wheel**
**but a sphere.**

# Exit Door Closed

**Down**
**because the flame is still holy**
**but the moon's cold cloak**
**has won.**
**Leaning into the crossing over,**
**sweet exhaustion, the love of**
**absolute rest.**

**Is this what the fish feels**
**after minutes on the hook, on the dock,**
**or the rat gasping in the trap,**
**lunging, flailing before finding**
**the peace of death?**

**Fear is not a name, keeps no company with surrender.**
**Holding the reset rose in my hand. I see colours**
**that please me, the brush stroke of renewal**
**and a house true to its inheritance.**

**Every hero eventually dies,**
**and their mourning is made**
**into a ritual.**
**Light of God, kinder than a mother's wing,**
**richer than the formation of a new constellation.**

**My arms are enough,**
**even my meagre successes seem sufficient,**
**infused with Your light,**
**taking away the pressure of existence,**
**keeping pace with duties**
**and the honouring of dreams.**

## Stark Relief

**Blundering, in disguise -**
**a gift masked in disease,**
**tongues imploring forgiveness,**
**love tested at its roots, glorious**
**as mountains.**
**Boredom and fear meeting in unison,**
**finding a strange fulfilment behind locked doors,**
**venturing to walk in the open air, take hikes,**
**sit by the lake-waters and dream, alone.**
**A gift that doesn't carry a typical joy,**
**but breaks down the superficial slaughter**
**of what is truly meaningful, simplifies the one thing,**
**the all thing, that connects and is worthy of attention.**
**Love in illness, love at death, love in gratitude**
**for the lifeforce we have been given - its sacred mission,**
**not meant to be plundered on distraction and greed.**
**God is the only safe ship left to climb aboard on,**
**the only ship afloat on this burning sea.**

**The gift has come, and yes like everyone,**
**I am afraid. In my mind,**
**I join the people singing,**
**raw in mutual fear and faith,**
**a collective voice, harmonized, joined**
**from balcony windows.**

# The light has gone out.

**Nothing is plenty or even sufficient.**
**The door opens, but there is no escape**
**just the long wait under an isolated sun,**
**walled up in fear and deficiency.**

**It could have been completed, sealed**
**into the account but darkness hammered**
**the blush from blooming, and yes, the lesson**
**to see was written on the Stonehenge, in**
**the past lives in an ancient Athenian tribe or**
**when setting five-alarm fires on the moon**
**when you were a golden muscle, ripe**
**and violently ending anything soft.**

**Greed gave you all the cards, opinions that**
**lacked a spiritual dimension. It will not come**
**until this ecstasy is laid flat.**

**You see – O Tantalus!**
**You see the stain that created your torment, unearthed.**
**Walk on it, shed its blood and let it bleed out**
**its deeply embedded drive and expectation.**

**Hell is individually formed,**
**a private backyard betrayal.**

**Walk into the shower,**
**let it cascade down and dissolve this last**
**unseen-before glitch – see it, wide-eyed**
**and say 'forgive me' say it and**
**be free.**

# Rationed

**Ration out the unified soul,**
**make it many instead of one.**

**See the breakdown of what is holy,**
**split into particles**
**uncomplimentary, wasted.**

**Trust in the brute because he has**
**no self-doubt, no self-examination,**
**Because it is easy to sacrifice**
**autonomy for certainty**
**and slice the swan's wing**
**for monetary gain.**

**Before the circle became a line, some**
**nutshells still held their core - arguments were**
**for the sake of reflection and deeper knowledge.**
**When the circle became a line, tyrants were given**
**free-reign - the mutual exchange**
**between fear-and-getting replaced morality.**
**The ones of lights passed away**
**passed over their passion, replacing**
**faith with conspiracy theories.**

**Describe this gift of life.**
**What does it mean to you?**
**There are many waves,**
**one water**
**equality within the hierarchy**
**value in no-control.**

**Death is automatic**
**but choice**
**no God**
**yes God**
**is always**

**an open door.**

# Open Wide

**On the table, the whole of humanity**
**burning with fear, this onslaught**
**of harm, but love is not the victim.**
**All who have a soul within them, end up**
**rising up to meet the challenge of justice**
**and compassion.**

**The few who died long before their death**
**are now indisputably barren**
**and frighteningly corrupt.**

**Acts of mercy, acts of grace –**
**all of us deciding**
**which side we believe in.**
**All of us are now citizens, heroes of our charge,**
**children of the divine, effective, more**
**than helpless, feeding off God's mercy, day to day**
**hour upon hour - held hostage to our inner world,**
**stripped of superficiality and distraction,**
**called to claim the slaughter we are accomplices to -**
**to choose the resting-nest of gratitude.**

**We are all asked to perform doubtless music,**
**formulate our morals and digest them**
**like a cure we have no choice but**
**to adhere to**

**for the horseman is at our tails and his shadow**
**is hard upon our shoulders.**

# Deathbed

**Strength has changed**
**appearance, ends with a mask,**
**begins with food of only a humane source.**

**In the late winter I built my nest,**
**made a cradle from branches and waited.**
**Now that spring is over and no offspring came,**
**I consider this cozy island a curse,**
**feel the heat approaching and have no joy to give.**

**Upstream, blood soaked in debt and weapons**
**I cannot wield, weapons**
**on the floor, by my feet, too heavy to lift.**
**I embrace the dread like I once did grief – inhabiting**
**my days with failed effort, trying to dull transgressions,**
**manage my Sisyphus rock**
**– push for the prize that never comes – push,**
**believing it will, knowing it won't.**

**My barren longing, unremarkable, repetitive.**
**I would change my name, my shape, if it would help,**
**grow plumage where there is none, but my energy is crushed**
**with clinging, and the freedom that lords before me**
**like an oasis is only finished fiction,**
**a book of great magnitude, but**
**foiled of substance and lasting nourishment.**

# Build

**By the whirling heap of fate**
**a new being is born – one that**
**watches, moves and holds.**

**One that stands without future plans**
**or regrets but takes two days to make**
**a decision and then sticks with it, in spite of**
**contrary opinion.**

**Blood on the knees, covering the unborn joy**
**that does not know if it can withstand the first breath,**
**but still kicks its way out of the womb.**

**There is nothing easy here on this planet,**
**its sharp beauty cuts and bends everything living**
**to the cruel unpredictable violence of survival.**
**Collapse, famine, or warm nest out of the rain –**
**the same parallel process of dying and becoming.**

**Standing noble when in weakness,**
**or succumbing to slavery**
**is the only vantage point choice.**

**Touch your eyes,**
**touch an outburst of sorrow,**
**touch beautiful geography underfoot.**

**Faith is a house, takes you in**
**to live sometimes as part of the furniture,**
**sometimes as a carpenter,**
**making furniture, sweeping,**
**making more furniture.**

# Mercy without Miracles and Miracles without Mercy

**A day 2,500 years ago**
**and life was the same, struggling**
**to understand God and fate**
**and how the stars may hold**
**prediction but lack all means**
**of mercy. For mercy**
**was an evening without power, was weak**
**as was seen**
**the majesty of forgiveness.**

**It was before Jesus came as sibling, as friend,**
**revealing the depths of God's grace, the redemption**
**in surrender and late evening devotion, breathing**
**with the direction of the wind, open to hardships**
**as to miracles, orchestrated by a loving hand.**

**First God was many in our minds,**
**segregated, dissected, tangled with human**
**hypocrisies, pride and jealousies.**
**Then God was one in our minds,**
**higher, mightier than death, closer still,**

**until**

**Jesus**

**let us hold God in our arms, be held like**
**a tiny flower head is held by a child's hand,**
**cupped, yellow buttercup, glowing,**
**treasured by God, each of us,**
**a necessary and loved creation.**

**Back then, even great minds glimpsed**
**such profound greenery,**
**but could not complete the joy.**

**Jesus is**
**humanity's completion with God,**
**connection, void of complications,**
**like an infant's first smile or that infant,**
**growing, learning,**
**holding out her arms,**
**saying your name.**

# Water Wings

**Taking off my water wings**
**soon**
**maybe in a year or two,**
**maybe in ten**
**I will front crawl**
**fast to the edge, go under, somersault,**
**push off and speed,**

**or climb the high diving board,**
**up the steep metal steps, gripping**
**tightly, half-way there to the edge, three quarters then**
**race and leap, arms outstretched, thumbs locked and**
**going down, hitting the water fast, gliding across**
**the whole of the deep end.**

**Letting go of spiritual infancy, primitive**
**magic-tricks that sometimes worked,**
**most of the time, didn't,**
**to soothe my anxiety, needing**
**the evidence of God, instead**
**of trusting faithfully, fully**
**- water wings off, front-crawl free.**

## Wind – Marrow – Bone

**Death comes softly**
**like a small wave or**
**a blanket, lessening**
**the stroke. Slowly**
**the energy leaves and also**
**the will power to not let it go.**
**Death is gentle as a spider's steps**
**or like the innate laws of decency**
**methodically, incrementally, ignored.**
**Death, I rejoice in you, as I didn't know**
**how easy your touch was or how**
**pain and weakness arrive like your welcome mat.**
**Unless you arrive violent, but then, that too,**
**because it is quick, is merciful.**
**Bravery on the altar where you are worshipped**
**where you demand every part of a soul unseen to be seen,**
**equal parts of cowardice and courage, the darkening whine**
**and the warrior who makes it up the stairs**
**when the body's strength is but a secret, barely**
**audible, straining to be heard.**
**Death you are tender,**
**you ready us for the quiet nod - yes**
**or the scream that ripples across the ocean - yes!**
**You make sure to narrow us completely**
**so you are the only way out, and we want out,**
**we want you – like a lover - Death,**
**lover of the drowned, the burned,**
**the cancer ward occupants, the accident fallen**
**and illness that compresses the lungs,**
**topples over the perching bird.**

**In the end, we all want you,**
**jealous lover of the living,**
**you take us all**
**either with a breaking virility or**
**smother us in a maternal fold.**

**Beautiful Death,**
**I have come close to you**
**and I learned**
**you are made of love,**
**embracing completely,**
**sensuously,**
**in the final surrender.**

# Prometheus Speaks

**Prometheus speaks**
**from my bathroom tiles, wailing**
**his defiance and fiery nightingale burning**
**with his tongue still unrooted**
**and his limbs bound to the rock, spread**
**like wings – Titan of the windfall, humanity's**
**hope and champion, more brilliant than**
**his dumb and primitive siblings, more committed**
**than their arrogant and willful offspring.**

**Prometheus in the shower curtain, dripping**
**liquid fire down the drain, plunging**
**into the underworld depths**
**then up for a greater torment to meet the predator bird,**
**dispelling all screams and ghosts and holding tight**
**to his suffering-throne and his compassion**
**for such a flawed creation.**

**Prometheus finally rescued**
**as the warm water exerts itself from on high,**
**- strong Herculean flow -**
**the wounded centaur accepting his fate.**
**Flow Prometheus,**
**trustworthy, burning, speaking**
**your conquering gospel,**
**the first crucifixion**
**the first flame ignited**
**before love's great inception.**

# Dying, an echo

**Hardship harder than**
**the unprotected inferno I fell into**
**that has sealed above.**
**No courage will raise me out**
**of its burning cavity,**
**its lava-ruin grief pressing down**
**like a great wave of heavy water.**
**All that's mortal in me is sick, subjected**
**to this bright and furious master.**
**All that is immortal in me has gone silent,**
**its sails clipped, its joy orphaned and emptied.**

**What happened?**
**How did this take me, pull me**
**into its unbearable heat so fast, so frozen,**
**draining my life-force with its hot poison,**
**leaving me no option of flight?**
**How did I become an exile of all I held sacred,**
**hardly walking up the stairs,**
**every breath a banishment from life,**
**every resting position, a pressure on my chest**
**like an anvil coming down, down**
**and staying its weight, concave?**

**What do I see? Nothing. Value**
**has turned to ash.**
**Love holds my hand but cannot release me**
**from this hell.**
**I wake up and prayers have failed me,**
**all my understanding has crumbled**
**like wafer chips of dried-out clay -**
**eagle broken, sliced up on a sharp rock.**

# Bird

**Up into**
**a wet pillow cloud sky**
**bird of flame**
**like a yellow rose**
**touching the toes of gods,**
**past treelines and skyscrapers,**
**daughter of the wing,**
**receiver of the mating dance.**
**Bird beyond laws and names,**
**the visionary's touchstone,**
**keep your flame and rise**
**like love rises and engulfs**
**the blooming darkness or like water rises**
**devouring the whale-hunter's boat.**
**Up into the firmament,**
**higher than the experienced stars,**
**your craft is art, your light uproots time.**
**Do not land, but keep rising, a gold dome**
**over the blue, answer every dream**
**with a glowing !yes!**
**be our temple and our immortal hope.**
**Bird**
**absent of grief or longing, bird of flame,**
**you are smooth, loose and pliable as**
**the flesh of deep eternity.**

# Hell Seen

**Unseen, the darkness is a tsunami gateway,**
**engulfing every fragment of will,**
**builds unexpected, a shock of water filling**
**the lungs, chaos infesting every corner of the mind,**
**rational thought on fire, cindering, seared by**
**loveless insanity.**

**This is the inheritance that must be thrown overboard,**
**tossed like a corpse that is plagued with a contagion.**
**No room for sentimental mercy which is not mercy,**
**only a longing for comfort that in the end**
**compromises protective barriers that must be upheld.**
**All ties must be cut and loyalty to God,**
**the only link left.**

**I visited hell, shadows grabbing my every corner of flesh,**
**loneliness like an amputated limb,**
**released and thrashing, abandoned**
**from its fertile blood source.**
**I was afraid, every cell drenched in horror.**
**I had no voice, no substance.**
**I was shown hell, experienced hell**
**a flood, a plummeting  down  down**

**Even in that evil landscape,**
**my loved ones saved me,**
**prayers said outloud saved me,**
**and the haunting loosened its hold.**

**Now seen, I see**
**there is only God or hell -**
**God or**
**anguish, anxiety, blunt force destruction,**
**pounding torment, a rotting waste.**
**God and**
**life embraced,**
**a rapturous and difficult glory.**

# You Open Your Mouth

**You open your mouth and**
**I am gone again like**
**before I could walk, like**
**before I had anything but you**
**and this connection, gripped**
**in a violent spin, intimacy purging gravity**
**by free will alone, blood for food and food**
**tossed on a gravestone, seeding a graveyard,**
**lording triumphant over reality, more potent than**
**waiting for the streetcar in a cold sub-zero winter,**
**waiting with wet boots and uncombed-through hair,**
**like fruit that never spoils**
**or gets polluted with scented-hand touch.**

**You say destruction**
**and I am beating the light,**
**slashing the torpedo into**
**smaller precise devises of doom.**
**You say reconciliation**
**and I am beside you, planting**
**my vengeance like dead peeled skin,**
**like waking and walking**
**to the bathroom, leaving the dream behind.**

**You open your mouth and**
**you open a door to a feast**
**outstripped of butchery and good cheer,**
**outshining all but the lover's volatile love pitching,**
**emerging, continuing, clear,**

# Breastplate

**With this breastplate**
**forged in the fires of tangible Hell,**
**I will go forward, doling out**
**gifts that God entrusted me with,**
**feeding sparrows, starlings and squirrels.**

**I will command my days with a mature discipline,**
**more so tied to the wind in a place of freedom,**
**boundaries set by my soul.**

**Everyday I will eat and be grateful.**
**I will leave my licence plate in the gutter,**
**travel light like I did when I was younger,**
**one knapsack for years – live in this home**
**but claim no possessions. I will listen,**

**pitch my tent in any wood**
**as long as the birds guide me there,**
**and I will keep myself breathing,**
**full of breath –**
**active, on watch.**

**I will love, love like I do**
**with a personal intensity**
**the ones that feed me with their love,**
**keep me in grace and breakdown the shadows.**

**With this breastplate I will go,**
**for I know how evil consumes**
**in small amounts with small yeses,**
**small indulgences that grow into**
**a vast hole.**

**I will wear sandals in the summer,**
**a jacket in the winter and this breastplate,**
**now grafted to my skin,**
**willfully dreaming this journey forward,**
**surfacing uninhabited shores.**

# Hector

**Shining Hector**
**Man-killer Hector**
**Hector, prince of the walled city,**
**lover of loyalty, prized invincible,**
**devoted, never set adrift by lust or changing distractions.**

**Hater of war Hector**
**Warrior Hector, protector**
**of a worthy ideal, a harvest of fulfilment,**
**wealth for all, raining down from your native desert sky.**
**Husband on a private balcony, holding time still**
**for declarations of love as the flooding enemy-army neared,**
**gathering its hero-giants and enraged half-gods,**
**sealed in indestructible armour.**

**Hector, son of Queen Hecuba and King Priam, brother**
**to reckless sweat-hearted Paris.**
**Father of an infant babe, Hector,**
**who feared death like every other, ran and was chased,**
**then finally stood alone, willingly, facing his murderer,**
**knowing the result like knowing the lunatic gods, how**
**they etch out each mortal's destiny**
**on the inkpad of their erratic whims.**

**Never marked or bruised, your corpse above ground**
**for eleven days, still fresh as when your soul first departed.**
**Your father begged to bury you, winning this small mercy,**
**you were buried, sacred rites restored.**

**You were mourned for your perfect beauty,**
**(their defender lost, their defeat inevitable).**
**You were loved for your strength,**
**the kind derived from clear-cut purity,**
**a rare internal moral code.**

**Glorified, the tale of Hector,**
**outliving millenniums,**
**outlasting countless other heroes.**

**Hector of the soft dark hair, golden helmet, shining.**

# Wings

**Continue dreamer, down the halls,**
**through the citadel,**
**gather wings in your arms – small ones,**
**medium ones, feathered and translucent.**

**Follow the mini-current across the line,**
**then rush through forbidden lands,**
**drop those wings and wave your arms,**
**sing loud, sing ugly – nothing is a branch**
**that can't be broken, nothing is a swing**
**that can't be stilled.**

**Far away, in the ocean's depths**
**there is no visible sun,**
**no use for warmth or a changing horizon.**
**The bird is condemned**
**in those depths and your voice**
**is just a bubble.**

**Rush to the edge of the shore**
**and decide your fate, glittering surface all aglow,**
**confined on land or in the water?**
**Take a step forward or**
**turn around, commit absolutely**
**and move.**

**Continue dreamer, down the halls,**
**listen to the warnings,**
**swallow them into your gut and**
**test your courage,**
**gather those wings and rush.**

# Cliffs

**I died every day**
**on the sorrowing cliffs,**
**a wolf pack closing in,**
**things I knew and believed in,**
**ordained, then tossed over the edge.**

**Prophecy was nothing, and shelter and bread**
**connected to this tortuous trope,**
**turned comfort upside down and spat**
**upon my flush face with all the vigor**
**of a personal enemy.**

**I fell asleep near the cliffs, woke up and wondered**
**why I was left here - still alive, no rescue in sight -**
**thinking of a helicopter, an angel, an army of**
**hunters or even a large helium balloon**
**to grab onto and ease my descent.**
**But I stayed near the cliffs, hearing the pack,**
**seeing their eyes through the undergrowth**
**but never feeling their jaws at my flesh**
**and never crossing the barrier into the abyss.**

**I stayed on the edge and waited as though I was**
**already in my grave, and I thought - is this**
**a purgatory punishment? A loop etched in linear**
**time, a fire on my back that burns and burns**
**but never consumes?**

**I am not sure if I am sleeping.**
**I am not sure if I am truly alive or a ghost**
**destined to repeat an unending horror,**
**wandering through the same torment.**

**I am ready to see, close my eyes, nearer, nearer, and leap,**
**be dashed into fragments or be vindicated, either way,**
**relieved.**

## Onslaught Cloud

**When courage is smoke,**
**and it takes far too much effort**
**to build a mound to stop the flood,**
**when fears and the bleeding winds of reality**
**destroy the indestructible diamond, turn it**
**into dust particles, lapped up**
**by the tongue of unsuspecting animals,**
**and the storm, it digs a wound like a valley,**
**red and brutal,**
**when that happens, it is time to sleep, dream**
**of better days, watch TV, read**
**and listen to other people's stories,**
**bury your battle-slain heart under the covers and wait**
**for meaning.**
**Meaning when found will restore courage,**
**soothe the raw chasm, give faith in the setting sun**
**and maybe even**
**press up against you, thundering,**
**a glorious beauty.**

# Pretzel

**This prayer was the last prayer**
**devoured and regurgitated into a lie.**
**Hearts I voted on**
**desired safety above courage, avoidance**
**above truth and speculation above action.**

**Two-fold was this falsehood, this**
**pollination of pitiful love.**
**Drug-induced, polluted with vagueness**
**and amoral substitutes for honour.**

**I believed in you, comforted you**
**in your wanderings and in your torture.**
**But this river has gone undernourished,**
**dried into a barely moving stream.**
**What was grand and glorious,**
**a life source for a whole ecosystem,**
**now strides without gusto or usefulness.**

**Liar at the full moon.**
**Liar when you hide in your fantasy,**
**and then you lie again and hiding it,**
**say it does not count but it counts,**
**each lie builds a bed, littered with compost,**
**bars that block the view from the sky.**

**Everything I thought was strong,**
**unbreakable, deathless,**
**has ended in this infestation,**
**as you play-act queen light warrior,**
**indulging in ego-feeding conspiracy theories,**
**harming truth, defiling acts of other people's courage.**

**So much suffering, whitewashed,**
**arrogantly dismissed, by you,**
**doubtless in your cult-convictions,**
**saying ‘awakening!”, building platforms**
**on top of platforms –**
**a grotesque paradigm of crazy,**

**where you have all the answers**
**and I have nothing left**
**to hope for or to say.**

# Dissolved

**A weighted shadow was on my back,**
**triumphant, feeding off of me**
**in day-to-day thoughts,**
**dealings at the grocery store,**
**getting dressed**
**and walking.**

**It flourished its victory everywhere I went,**
**in the judgement of strangers and the shame I bore,**
**wearied by reality.**
**It was thirsty, thirsty for the substance of my faith,**
**feasting on the debauchery of my despair and in that feast,**
**it grew four times its original size,**
**cementing my wings in permanent collapse.**

**Now this weighted shadow is dissolving, swiftly**
**in glorious movements of clear! clear! clear!**
**It has not gone completely yet, but I am stretching,**
**able to raise my neck and strengthen my shoulders.**

**My fears are painless, grace has entered**
**and brought the promise forward.**
**Under my eyelids shapes are forming,**
**ones I have never known –**
**tribes of mighty animals and**
**communities of celestials.**

**We say hello.**
**We walk on the fresh born grass,**
**and the grass morphs into a mountain,**
**with a valley,**
**with a river.**

# So Far

**So far the winter came**
**for 22 years, steps taken**
**to burn the past failed**
**like speaking, washed up on silent shores.**

**So far I lived with eye drops**
**from the river of honey**
**stolen and then savoured.**
**The Earth's cord was tied to a heritage**
**of fear and inevitability – children**
**with beaten upon organs, panic, grovelling**
**at the feet of survival, so far.**

**So far, the miracles came**
**and covered my breasts with oil,**
**softening my hair with almond milk,**
**saying – this is enough – so far.**

**Half of the day I was tormented,**
**half of the day I was in bliss,**
**in a private heaven full of secret doors**
**and perfect-shaped rolling hills,**
**watching my children grow, loving**
**and learning from my Apollo-love husband**
**of the lyre and bow and arrows, riveting,**
**slicing the dead wood, bringing both burn and joy.**

**So far I have not been on many airplanes,**
**have stayed most days indoors,**
**feeding those children and animals**
**of rich personality and anomalies,**
**enduring some, mostly,**
**nourishing, being nourished.**

**Now I am drinking solely from the sky,**
**releasing the tether of gloom**
**and penetrating the center**
**without the leftover madness**
**of senseless suffering.**
**Cracking the shades of oblivion, released**
**by a gift that was always coming**
**and by the grace that has carried me**
**so far.**

# Simple

**The darkness crashed**
**on a sapling morality,**
**cracked pretensions and then hope.**
**It was two-fold, folding the**
**young visionary and the tired warrior –**
**into one power, depleted, elapsed.**

**It weakened a once flourishing joy, skillful**
**in its demise, necessary for what was**
**born after – compassion in harvest,**
**a home well built**
**on any hard or soft shore.**

**Raise the clock, break its hands,**
**snatch immortality from the arms**
**of culture.**
**Tiny dreams are gold. Trust in those dream,**
**even more golden.**

**Fast, faster in the circle –**
**run of linear time, gleam fastest**
**at the summit**
**at the nadir,**
**and commit to only love.**

# Take a Tree

**Take a tree**
**and its bond to the Earth,**
**its spell upon the sky**
**its stretch and swing among the squirrels.**

**That tree is all trees,**
**powerful without a pulse,**
**slow to hunger and slow to react.**
**It sleeps when it wakes,**
**receiving its action even when in full bloom.**

**Somebody climbed that tree,**
**wanted to build a fort but didn't,**
**just sat between a strong forked branch**
**and looked across and down.**
**Another touched that tree, its crust trunk,**
**the folds and curves of its sensual permanence.**
**In that touch was found a different measure of time,**
**a way to stand back and wait for growth.**
**In that touch was a shifting,**
**deeper than meditation,**
**connecting below and above rooftops.**

**Take a tree, in any season, at any time of the day,**
**the alien dimensions it moves between,**
**its response to the moon.**

**Knock on that tree softly and it will open.**
**It will greet you,**
**invite you in and show you a place**
**without dance, without disorder –**
**primordial creation, a wellspring-confidence,**
**a dream that has no dreamer.**

# Times

**Sometimes**
**I am dropped into evening's glory**
**beside you, relieved of cunning, anxiety,**
**at peace with the dried nest cupping a crushed egg.**

**Sometimes**
**it is forward**
**and the wind that is wild is on my side**
**gathering forces to aid in my direction.**

**Sometimes**
**I am single, cloaked in**
**a dazzling and lush solitude, plump**
**at the core.**
**Roots are wings and those wings**
**never suffer fractures or deformities**
**but are final in their perfection.**

**Sometimes**
**I ask for just enough**
**to be guided from my prison cell**
**to build a lasting fire and have food**
**for my children.**

**Sometimes**
**I know I am loved**
**and those times are the best times –**
**infinite voices to chose from, colours**
**everywhere and heaven tangible,**
**inside my sheltering home.**

# Temple

**Expanding, raw and pulsing**
**like newborns that grow into**
**individuals of their own**
**from one source**
**of everlasting literature.**
**From a cave of damp demise or**
**from violent fires, stoning heroes, forging heroes,**
**never quite sure who the enemy is.**
**From a journey of fantastical obstacles,**
**no mistakes made to stop and graze**
**and settle for anything but home.**

**Others have felt this eternal wealth of inspiration,**
**drank at its well and spoke –**
**making more riches, forests where feet**
**can travel and be in awe.**
**And from those others, still more have come –**
**one line flowing from the beginning.**

**O Ilium and Ithaca!**
**The same stars spinning.**
**Our beautiful Earth rest in you -**
**devotion, cunning and courage.**
**Love matters, but these things**
**which are the actions born from love**
**matter more.**

**Your fire is bright, brighter than**
**your ancient sun, has rhythm, repetition,**
**has harvested a hymn, etched permanently**
**in the foliage of our collective souls –**
**strong shoulders, driftwood, the first breath-cry**
**poet-bard.**

# Cost

**When you bleed**
**do you bleed in the summer,**
**early morning, on wet grass?**
**Or just because the door is open,**
**do you close it and walk up a steep hill?**

**When you are walled in, is it prejudice**
**or wisdom, packing you tight, with no**
**left-over spaces to stretch?**

**Each day comes like a sword, living is charged**
**with complexities that must be cut through -**
**amputated calcifications to reach the fleshy core.**

**I thought we could sail straight through the waters**
**but you, lover of chaos, called in the mad waves**
**and rode them gleefully to any shore.**
**I can only catch up,**
**follow and accept your choices.**
**I can only ask myself –**
**what fresh boundary must I break through?**
**What deep-set morality must I re-think?**

**For love, for you,**
**to keep us true, connected.**

# Which Way?

**Blue I wondered**
**blue in summer in**
**the mornings, caught in**
**the snail-size tales of**
**futility and inevitable floods.**
**Crooked boundaries, solid as**
**vapour, stung, trapped my fears**
**far from knowing the mercy of self-forgiveness.**

**I carried my purse like a stone, collected**
**empty wrappers, useless pens**
**and expired medicine,**
**burning always from head to foot,**
**impatient for change,**
**running into the concrete walls**
**of my collected fate.**

**Today, I look at the bloom of yellow flowers,**
**full in their last burst of joy before the frost,**
**and I am learning to drop that stone,**
**accept what lives and what cannot.**

**My bitterness has lost its vein to travel through,**
**forms and then corrodes.**
**Let others count their dollars**
**and covet extravagant houses.**
**I love my home like a trusted friend**
**and my garden is a portal into heaven**
**where the robin drinks and the mange-bitten squirrel**
**has made her home, digging, storing nuts.**

**Throats are cleared.**
**God's giant voice has won**
**my full attention.**
**Switch me off. I am ready**
**to swim far into the ocean, fast**
**until my lungs burn, desperate for air.**
**There I will stop (the shoreline visible, but barely).**
**There I will wait for an answer, recover my breath and**
**decide - further out or back home.**

# Hand

**I bore the yoke,**
**surging against the assault,**
**counted the thin space that buffered me**
**from disaster.**

**At the beginning there was obedience**
**but also the certainty of great heights.**
**After years of being unable to stretch,**
**there are no more prophecies or ranks to aim for**
**or glory for a future horizon.**

**The unknown is dense and impassable**
**as a steel sealed curtain.**

**Maybe here I can learn what Jesus always knew –**
**that prayers are speeches of the greatest importance**
**but listening holds more sway,**
**that obedience to God**
**is the only currency-exchange, must be**
**the authority of each steps taken,**
**is the root determination of peace**
**or anguish.**

**The first time I held out my hand,**
**I expected tangible abundance,**
**fruit, seeds, candy.**
**Now I hold out my hand**
**and hope only**
**to keep it open.**

**The air is light, causing no pressure, no trembling.**
**It is easy in its emptiness,**
**lacking anticipation, lacking**
**a future, past comparison.**

# Sister Lost

**A sister lost**
**to a mad-weave calamity,**
**hanging off the platform,**
**an ego-dream of dumb self-importance**
**- the war on truth that**
**masks its face as though it were truth,**
**but is only a gate to an easy explanation,**
**a system of hellish accusations and propped**
**up pillars of false justice, combating fake forms**
**urging anger forefront, poisoning**
**by such a sure promise of victory.**

**I send you sleeping sister. You say**
**I am sleeping and you twist your conspiracy theories**
**into a cloak of great magnitude, condescend,**
**so confident of your place of holy honour.**
**You jumped over the mark, missed it**
**and plunged into an upside-down dream of realty.**

**Once, a sister, a comrade, an unbreakable bond, broken.**
**I cannot see you. You cannot see the evil**
**you have wrapped in fool's gold,**
**claiming righteousness**
**as you measure your worth**
**by this aggressive attack on truth, denying**
**the wind, a child's cry, a mother's redemption.**

**Sister, I loved you, I still do,**
**but you have crossed the line.**
**It is terrifying to watch.**
**It is a shock to finally see**
**who you have become.**

**You took the plunge**
**long before I accepted your choice.**

**By your choice, your inner conflict**
**became an accelerant bile-fire,**
**you became a plurality, parts, parts**
**condemned to feed off**
**intellectual Jell-O,**
**find entertainment, immaculate purpose**
**in unbalanced passions and impulses,**
**claiming a cure by creating a disease.**

# Pythagoras-Ovid Royalty

**Unwed from heritage,**
**for the tie of tradition is darkness,**
**and the price in the folly of lineage,**
**is a line to cross, to be born into**
**but never earned.**

**Sink or swim in your history,**
**families are special**
**like all families are special, like**
**all cultures are beauty mingled with cruelty -**
**things that hardened into meaningless rock**
**and things that are allowed to move**
**and keep their lifeforce.**

**Be born like a new babe,**
**eyes set on only mother-father God,**
**don't carry the price and the agony of your blood**
**that is only blood, not spiritual, and only mighty in illusion**
**by you ordaining it so.**
**Belong nowhere and hold that freedom**
**that is hard to own and is immediate**
**as a mountain is**
**or a rainstorm.**

**Race with the wind, lighten the burden,**
**bathe in a burst of ever-fresh glory,**
**toeing the line for no one – release**
**all wounds and accolades**
**of what you claim as your own**
**but where and who you've never been –**

**If past lives are real, then belong to every race, every culture, every species.**

**Once we were all fish, so stop fishing.**

# Doorway

**Feet are flesh**
**and have been flesh**
**for thousands of years.**

**Saying wisdom is fresh**
**is the vanity of a present-age.**
**Better minds have spoken before,**
**challenged their own authority and**
**didn't take death as seriously as**
**we do.**
**Keeping honour was the only**
**crucial wealth, reciprocity and**
**the graciousness from host to guest.**
**Mothers loved and mothers grieved**
**with same weight of worry of motherhood,**
**and lovers held hands, wishing for great blessings**
**to match their great love.**
**Music was poetry and poetry was**
**the greatest gift of all bestowed, poetry**
**to keep humanity sane, stretching**
**further into the heights of immortality.**
**Feet wore sandals, raced across**
**Mediterranean shores. Hands**
**were always hands too,**
**beautiful, complex, useful.**
**Healers were rock-like with equal**
**shadows and solidity, attached to the earth,**
**rituals woven from the lion's breath.**
**Warriors too, took their virtue from**
**the mountains, climbed and often leaped –**
**breaking bones, arresting their pulses, lusting for fame**
**and a good afterlife.**

**My feet are soft like many who have feet I know.**
**Compassion still counts as the highest offering**
**offered from one to another.**
**The suffering of one resonates,**
**relatable across centuries –**
**a doorway-understanding**
**to the suffering of all.**

# World Away

**World away of hollows**
**where light escapes, gets**
**through, flourishes in the**
**sluggish dream of humans.**
**World of many layers – up**
**to pure communion and down**
**with the languishing un-animal beasts.**
**Rivers that flow and merge, travel down.**
**Oceans rise up, their surfaces new,**
**surfaces discovered – air, sometimes just**
**air, other times, divine space where eyes**
**can come close in, examine the stars.**
**World away of purple and gold,**
**merging lava with its harmony above.**
**Thorns that wake the many sleepers,**
**places where forgiveness is the only escape.**
**Stones are mirrors, their surfaces blurred,**
**their boundaries unmasked and glorious flowers are**
**eternal.**
**World away where the faith in money**
**is a mouse-trap, catching souls, keeping them there,**
**broken and anguishing.**
**World above of pure worship**
**and simple communion - smells move like lust,**
**desires amplified, approved,**
**like electric current-catalysts**
**for standard-accepted-forms of fulfilment.**
**Colours of elms and of eagles, everything**
**less thick and less challenging.**
**Heads up, love**
**the obvious go-to solution.**

**World away of patchwork tunnels,**
**going down, going up, a journey**
**matched in the imagination –**
**many dimensions, many limitations**
**added or lifted.**
**Moon half. Moon whole.**
**World away where**
**walking forward with truth at the helm**
**is the maker of glory,**
**a living lucky charm.**

# White Butterflies and a Red Squirrel

**Influences deserved**
**never arrive, and**
**the gift remains in the pocket**
**like chapstick on a cold day,**
**or as bits of sharpness to remind you**
**not to get too comfortable, complacent**
**or convinced of your rigorous calculations**
**when you calculate the sides of a square,**
**a triangle, an oracle reading.**

**People you thought would never go,**
**have gone, walked away**
**from sanity's reach, most likely never to return.**
**Things you wish would have left years go, remain,**
**your days outstanding, tied to the**
**root-whip survival, lashing.**

**And there is more never expected -**
**a banquet of nourishing literature,**
**a husband still coalescing with brilliant light,**
**two children grown, kind and weaving,**
**and the animals, older, happy**
**watching the birdbath in the flush garden,**
**in a backyard that in the early morning**
**as you scan the interior and the perimeter,**
**you are sure that nothing could be more glorious,**
**pleasing, leaves you praising**
**for being allowed to witness such royalty.**

**God's love heats up your pores,**
**fills your nostrils with green scents,**
**fills your ears with the chatter of communities –**
**sparrows, starlings, bumblebees, white butterflies**
**and the red squirrel. You are sure**
**such kneading, thinning-thickening harmony**
**is the natural state of being,**
**propelled to experience this nirvana, (spinning, spherical)**
**knowing tomorrow it won't last, but also knowing**
**it will always last, existing, uncorrupted,**
**sealed, continuing in this moment, this morning,**
**this day, in this exact summer.**

# Communion

**A snail is a slug with a shell,**
**is like a hand with only one thing to claim,**
**was like my thoughts that leapt out of a stream,**
**fell on land and could not get back.**
**Old life**
**like a spider caught in quicksand,**
**gone into the murky underground.**
**Worry was a cavity,**
**a reservoir endlessly re-filled,**
**scooping up a cup, resolving a problem,**
**as old problems grew larger to fill the space**
**or infant ones formed.**
**Leaving the dramatic spinning wheel,**
**mending the wounds of sacrifice.**
**How long before the thirst to satiate**
**is satiated, then becomes thirst again,**
**greater than the first longing?**
**Why is there heat everyday and never rain?**
**Is time just the planets rotating**
**like spherical untouchable gods, or**
**is it nonsense, divisions made**
**for small minds to draw imaginary**
**pathways through stark oblivion?**
**When I learned**
**Jesus walked with his arms open,**
**his hands empty, feeding, being fed,**
**then I arrived in God's grace**
**as though I had always been there.**
**My past was relinquished,**
**incorporated like a candle flame**
**into a larger fire,**
**into the greatest summit.**

# Ambrosia

**Light feet**
**feathered longing**
**between a grazing herd**
**and the grand appearance of peace.**
**Dreams arrive, slide in like a knife**
**to reshape reality, denying**
**blood spray, the ripped winter coat,**
**stories that die untold.**
**Add the nectar, symbolisms of jumbled-up**
**joy – a dog's smile, a run through the forest,**
**tie it together like a housecoat or an idea that has**
**lingered without reward. And there,**

**fate is waived**
**for a stronger endearment, choices**
**are made that shock the natural order.**
**Love is understood as an act of the greatest courage**
**and bodies change, transform their elemental structure -**
**wind becomes sea, stone turns to air.**

**All guests are rested and fed through this metamorphosis,**
**things that disfigured and imprisoned are blessed**
**for the strength and moral clarity that they gave, then**
**like dreams, they are kissed gently,**
**remembered when first waking, then**
**while brushing teeth, they are**
**gone.**

# The Night Before

**I praised and held the wind in a jar.**
**All the while, the stars melted, old gods**
**were replaced by new ones, and the once invincible**
**were fated to run lunatic through communities, terrorizing**
**and leaving pathways of blood with their strong arms**
**and war-loving minds.**
**Dancers curled up like centipedes,**
**poets lost their poetry to analysis and clichés,**
**and worst of all –**
**no one was able to tell the difference between**
**what was gold and what was a trinket.**
**My hair was long, back then, I remember,**
**my beaten-up hands were supplicating,**
**but every blessing was denied me, from weariness,**
**from loss and from my own hard-hearted pride.**
**I was ready to be fatally wounded, as such an ache**
**would be an adventure.**
**I was ready to run across a river**
**and test the currents' force against my own resolve.**
**So I went north, away**
**from the wicked heat Mediterranean sun.**
**I praised, and in that praise, was half-way perfect.**
**A mouse could not know my skilled imagination**
**and an eagle was too high to tap deep into my shadows.**
**I went up a mountain, but first over**
**that river. I sang a new language when**
**I touched the snow, sang,**
**making an Eden in that virgin toil.**

# Mid-air

**I reached across the riddle-barrier,**
**shaved my head and walked through the door.**
**I took my clothes out of the closet**
**and burned them,**
**I watched the light dim all around**
**and walked over a cliff.**

**I did this without a choice, only a decision**
**to embrace a movement forward.**
**I was commanded to do this, and I consented,**
**not without struggle and self-loathing,**
**not without fear and a sense of deep failure.**

**Now I am falling, I am in the air, eagle-spread,**
**a sharp pain in my side and the wind whistling**
**its rapture.**
**Everything people do**
**is bound to kill them eventually.**
**Take dancing or bricklaying or being a mother.**

**I am still falling, I have not landed**
**in someone's arms nor on the sharp rocky bottom.**
**The pain remains, so does the wonder,**
**as I fall, falling,**

# Advance

**Leave this place,**
**it is for beginners**
**and the ground is an overgrown**
**outside used-to-be sanctuary, trapping**
**you in its weeds.**

**Be steadfast as a revelation**
**years after being revealed, infused**
**to your intelligence, supplying water**
**and detachment when necessary.**

**Walk through the ruins then jump the fence**
**and do not relapse into nostalgia or a thousand**
**what-ifs that have no viable conclusion.**
**Pull the plug, cast away what was once**
**a masterpiece but has since degraded,**
**orbiting a dead star.**

**It is easy as taking off a coat on a warm day.**
**It is dialectics and you are at the nadir,**
**traveling the circle around, soon to rise.**

**Leave what you cannot afford to keep**
**as it is too invasive a burden**
**and you are ready to expand, stretch out,**
**canopy a richer domain, permitted**
**to be fully nourished and explore.**

# Crossing Over

**Crossing over into**
**a porous aftermath,**
**a root-return basket**
**of exposed veins and ligaments.**

**It is sad to be like a lung**
**that cannot fully expand, but good**
**to open a window and appreciate a breeze.**

**When I quit feeling responsible**
**for what I am not responsible for**
**I will be free to sort out my assets**
**and impressions, structure them into**
**a viable source of fodder and food for**
**all who I love.**

**When I wore a uniform,**
**I thought myself the whole army.**
**When I wore the monastic robe,**
**I placed myself at the mouth of the void**
**and whispered to myself achieve! achieve!**
**When I walked with no arms,**
**only legs, no language, I thought boldly in block colors,**
**in over-exposed senses, smelling indisputable exactitudes**
**like insects mating in tall grass, and fish**
**rotting on the river banks, and even the sun**
**had a smell, its fragrance dependant**
**on the season and its placement in the sky.**
**When I lived without a body,**
**lived as part of the swing-loop-spin cosmos,**

**formless and yet whole,**
***thick and thin,***
***curved and straight, sensitive***
***without the possibility of being wounded,***
**I knew crossing over**
**was treacherous.**
**I chose to cultivate the separation principle**
**and see if I could return to unity.**

**The body is a tale, the rest**
**has no account to record.**
**I filled my flask. I died fighting**
**and also when surrendering.**

**The law will never be known,**
**only fragments of the law, a maturing of,**
**and maybe even inclusions, after a long**
**century time.**

**Jesus is water flowing, limitless like heaven is**
**in vitality and truth.**
**All I must ever do is guard that connection**
**as the only thing sacred – everything else**
**that is irrational, rational**
**or cohesive or unleavened or supplied**
**will make contact but be redundant,**
**be imperfect, and leave**
**a longing, insatiable.**

# *Lantern*

## What were you as a man Aristotle?

**Bend the mind in fifteen different places**
**to pull out a particular, that**
**at the moment of capture,**
**shifts form and demands further**
**adaptation.**
**Summersault**
**through definitions, substances,**
**entities - modeling God**
**on unity, and evil on chaos.**
**What genius generates such a mind,**
**dilemmas purely in abstraction -**
**a voice swimming in a multi-layered**
**vortex of ideas and sophisticated vocabulary,**
**adept at defining, circulating, making movement,**
**unparalleled density in each paragraph,**
**in each line of unmatched cerebral dexterity?**
**So I found you and I don't know how**
**to take you in, if I can, but your observations**
**of elemental spirituality are exciting, and each read**
**is a like long dive into a living coral reef-barrier -**
**colours alien, animals sublime - both prey and predators,**
**proficient in the art of survival, and the energy!**
**Take me in -**
**if what I thought would take a week,**
**takes months, and I sift through**
**your summits and grooves slowly, tasting**
**sugar, sour wine, touching**
**the tips of wings from the flight of many birds zipping**
**around my atmosphere at capacity - sometimes**
**as shadows, sometimes showing their bright plumage,**

**and those times I can glimpse, participate**
**in your singular reasoning, hear a man's voice**
**labouring under metaphysical complexities**
**and bend my mind to the cyclone of your gospel,**
**spinning, upside down but in perfect order -**
**maker of an intellectual sermon,**
**thinker uncorrupted, unlike your mentor Plato was**
**with his didactic prejudices, with his what-fors**
**his where-fors - but you!**
**piecing out the divine,**
**making meals, ideals without rigidity,**
**chaptering out the primitive and the holy combined**
**with your plying, delving, ricocheting symphony**
**investigation.**

# The Peace of Angels

**I will release to receive**
**the peace of angels.**

**I will count the changes**
**as realizations, tip over**
**the radicalized, and be singular**
**in my transcendence.**

**Purpose is a translation. Within**
**are experiences discarded**
**or validated by memories.**

**Floating or being summoned**
**are counterweights, dangerous to stand**
**anywhere**
**but in the middle.**

**Loss is a hot vapour - burns as it first rises**
**and then, no more.**
**Love is everything - fills a moment**
**with the breath of eternity.**

**I will find the colour that draws me**
**the closest and I will choose it.**
**I will release the rest, know this surrender**
**as an exhale, a baptism to witness**
**that splits the sky.**

# Consecrated

**In a murky limpid place**
**you speak to me, vanquish my**
**anxieties with your radiant flame,**
**speak and say**
**the circumference is the sphere, is the line**
**and the space beyond**
**the sphere.**

**Cruelty is natural, mercy takes effort,**
**choice, consciousness.**
**Accepting mercy takes even more, a leap**
**out of the perpetual karma-shadows, a daring**
**to be without a past or a people or pebble stones**
**in your shoes.**

**You speak and say**
**succumb, and I will take your greed of self-knowledge,**
**all of your knowing, intelligence, reduce it to vapour,**
**collapse your preconceptions with the tranquility of**
**the first morning, and you will praise me with the wonder**
**of all who are newborn, without guise or storages.**

**Fall down, you say, to your hands and knees.**
**Look up, you say, to the charity of the sky.**
**Your being that was before is burned.**

**You say, love,**
**and I will be your restitution,**
**your water, your vortex, your art.**

# High Alert

**I see a fruit fly**
**on the mirror –**
**summer is a shallow blanket**
**lifting into autumn.**
**The moon has lips**
**like a shimmering worm,**
**wet from the rain.**

**The accelerant-fire came from a lightning blast,**
**after death, in-between**
**catching a breath.**
**The waters rose like a mountain**
**from a calming surface and engulfed my home whole,**
**sinking it into the lightless pressure below -**
**heavy, unbearable, rippling through each cell, each**
**cell exploding, axed of oxygen,**
**gasping for mercy in a merciless day.**

**I climb the stairs - the ghosts of that day**
**embedded everywhere, in the nails of the old wood floor,**
**in the claw foot bathtub, and in the dust on the shelves.**
**My mind rewinds, relives every fragment of horror,**
**saturating my pores, bloating my heart**
**with unimaginable panic, again.**

**But this morning there is peace in the hallway.**
**There is a sleeping, happy child who has grown**
**into a loving, dynamic man.**
**The rug was pulled,**
**but the furniture is now set right.**

**Breathe because breath**
**is all I have,**
**and this day without the quicksand-seizure,**
**this day to appreciate a peaceful morning,**

**to honour my son's astounding life-force, and his smile**
**embracing the road ahead, his fighter's dance,**
**quick-footed, energetic - a sturdy happiness,**
**perpetual, more permanent and potent**
**than the earthquake-eruption destruction**
**rolling (still visible)**
**in the wake behind.**

# Episodes, cascading

**Phoebus Apollo, cascade your light**
**around the dreary onlookers singing,**
**singing for the smooth edges of their many cracked bones,**
**for their children moving off the jagged rocks,**
**for the perishing of wasps in autumn,**
**and for the loss of those who pretended**
**their hearts were pure.**

**Twice I fell away from all I knew.**
**Twice in one year the earthquake-volcano-tsunami**
**erupted, sickening my house, my loved ones**
**and all my belongings.**

**There I bent like a moist twig,**
**rose out of the waters, slug-like, cold like**
**the first touch of hot hot fire.**

**Once more God's name is intricate, exact,**
**washing me aimless in my once**
**spiritual certainties.**

**Once more, every bridge is broken, the waters**
**swell, jut onto, swallowing, the shore.**

**My fear is a razor frantically cutting.**
**My panic is plural, multiplying,**
**tightening its barb-wire around my chest, throat,**
**and my eyes are hurting, pinprick pain when they open,**
**my eyes when they open**
**have gone silent, silent, blank.**

# Down Stream

**Savage poison**
**eclipsing the Wolf moon.**
**Time is putrid, embracing me**
**like an impending slaughter.**

**Can’t stop the attack no matter**
**how hard I strain, or promise**
**to defend the purity of my thoughts.**
**It will come to no good end, going on**
**to this end, head in a block wrench,**
**dreams staggering crippled**
**out of sight.**

**Come back before**
**I smash my back**
**on a long fall down the stairs,**
**into the darkness, past purgatory,**
**past the tragically resigned.**
**Come on, enough of this fated disaster.**
**For months now I’ve held my own,**
**held my head high, praised**
**every morning with directed action.**
**I can’t go back, picking through the rotting carnage,**
**pretending, giving energy to the pretense,**
**when my energy is sacred, belongs**
**to you O God and nothing else.**

**Please save me from this hissing atrocity,**
**this lethal succubus and the flashing behind**
**my eyes - the gigantic war inside,**
**knife wielding, piercing, rein-less**
**and the dark blood pain.**
**Please O God and Jesus, breathe your light**
**into me, fully. Let me love you the best I can.**
**Is there anything I can do? Is there any chance**
**for a miracle?**

**The shades are being pulled. The dungeon steps**
**are steep and I am heading down,**
**into that familiar filthy chamber.**
**Please take my hand, O God, lead me**
**into the open air and say "Go on your way -**
**you are mine, no longer a stranger."**

## No grief, No madness

**See yourself with real eyes,**
**there is no need for useless mythology.**
**The winter has come, the plants have died.**
**In spring they will take root and begin**
**to show promise. Just like you,**
**nothing magical –**

**You swell in times of joy**
**and deflate in times of sorrow,**
**stitching the inflatable boat.**

**This is your seat, accept it.**
**The struggle is the dream,**
**a hot order of suffering, unnecessary.**

**Stand up, kiss the Buddha and sit down.**

# The Letting Go

## I

## Blast

**Blast your devil's heart,**
**make it into paper confetti,**
**take it into outer space**
**and leave it there.**
**You stood on my shoes as I was**
**wearing them, dug your heels in**
**and spat in my eyes.**
**Cruel corpse rising from a muddy grave,**
**you are weak and monstrous, always claiming**
**to be the victim of someone else's scheme.**
**You are madness, the sharp ridged knife**
**of madness flaying in chaotic whiplash**
**at the sky, the birds, and all manner of trees.**
**Take back your darkness, swallow it whole,**
**let it stew in your innards, ruminate, reuniting**
**with the depravity already there.**
**You will never lie to me again,**
**pretending you wanted love when all you wanted**
**was to spread your malignancy, vengeance**
**for an imagined wrong, to give a landing slap**
**with the full force of violent resentment and envy.**
**Slither away, your bite left no mark, ineffectual**
**as your attempts to love. Judas, Brutus, master**
**of deep, un-emerge-able hell. Go home. Blast away**
**your caked-on body filth, reductive stench, spoiling**
**all you claimed to hold sacred.**

**II**

## Scapegoat

**Give yourself over**
**to the burn on your back,**
**the sordid array of demons**
**counselling your thoughts.**
**Let loose the bell string,**
**pull hard and hard again.**
**Find yourself a ditch to**
**fall into, scream out of,**
**wailing at the stars.**
**Ruin a good morning with**
**your sticky filth, throwing blame**
**to deflect from the wounds of**
**your own weakness.**

**I add you up - here, here and here.**
**I will not play along**
**with your parlour-tricks, your mayhem**
**of pointing-the-finger lies**
**when what I gave was love**
**- not perfect - but love nonetheless.**

**Coil up in your bitterness, resentments you wear**
**like a special pair of shoes,**
**walking around, leaving prints over prints**
**of your relentless pointless pacing.**
**I am not who you think I am, not willing**
**to hold guilt for your depravity, for a crime never my own.**
**I will say it again - I loved - I gave you love**
**the best I knew how, and I showed kindness.**

**Give yourself over to the intercourse**
**of false justifications and accusations and**
**see how it feels to be alone, here,**
**with what is left -**
**broken dollar-store jewelry, dandruff flakes.**
**Give yourself over and**
**get lost,**
**out of my thoughts**
**out into the isolated frozen-dead terrain**
**of your own sick making.**

**III**

## Monster

**Surrender to restore**
**the gifted strength, bruised**
**by curses, but otherwise unharmed.**
**Lay down the cloak of justice,**
**Achilles' revenge. Shout fire!**
**and let it burn.**
**What I did was falter,**
**overspeak with heart-felt enthusiasm,**
**that is all - thinking it was to a friend,**
**when in fact it was a snake, no, a worm,**
**without backbone, fangs or face.**
**Pour salt on it, watch it dissolve**
**into its true slime-form, formless**
**as the excuses of Brutus who cared nothing**
**for Rome, for Caesar, had only his own**
**power-grab in mind, wounded**
**that he was not chosen, pride-puffed,**
**feigning altruism to self-justify**
**his ruthless deed.**
**Appear to me, then pass like a bad smell**
**when a window is opened, or lavender calm is sprayed.**
**I was fooled when I should have honoured**
**the signs before, left, when I first witnessed**
**your shadow-flood self-pity play. Then**
**I should have hung up the phone and never**
**called back. But I kept on, over that hurdle, ignoring**
**its truth, always wondering, waiting for the monster**
**to unmask again. When it did, it was worse than before.**

**The wolves of hell have you now, surrounded**
**on all dimensional sides. Your vicious tongue,**
**still twisting and twirling, angered at the glare of the sun.**
**Promise me never to return. I promise you**
**I have walked by you, looked, then walked**
**further up the devil's back, out**
**of the inverted pit of your doing, never to look again.**
**Know I have no good memories of you,**
**they have all been eradicated by this hideous calamity.**
**Your words of love ring like lies,**
**hiding a hostile, grudge-madness,**
**a decade of trust mutilated by spiritual sickness.**
**Know your hydra head is now exposed,**
**sliced off, cauterised, nullified at the core, illusion blown -**
**your sweet-honey-poison dried up, disposed.**

**IV**

## Deviant

**Diminished in love**
**by excessive self-pity, locked**
**in anguish, in anger, in the burn-machine**
**lake layer of hell**
**as the long sword of your insanity**
**is wielded, intending to split**
**my skull in two.**

**I felt it breeze past, just missing its mark.**
**I felt the shock as I swerved, as you**
**suckled on the teat of your unfounded**
**resentments, brewing for months, draped**
**in pretty fabric, niceties and endearments.**
**How long had your soul gone foul,**
**and I never noticed?**
**No discussion, just your rigid arthritic finger**
**pointing, your creased forehead further creasing,**
**corpse-like and rising like a poltergeist**
**from the boiling mire.**

**Poor soul. Poor you as all of your**
**bold spiritual proclamations are reduced to naught.**
**Take care old woman. You cannot create**
**or be uplifted tied to this abhorrent deformity**
**of deluded self-righteousness.**
**You can feel good for a second, lift your sword,**
**and be exhilarated. You can rub your hands together,**
**feel the power of cruelty, demolishing**
**a friendship with one swift cut.**
**You can and you did, and it is now done –**

**The cancer I never knew was there is removed,**
**every cell radiated and eradicated.**
**I proclaim gratitude for getting me out,**
**for releasing me from the leach tethered to my underbelly,**
**masquerading as a trusted alley.**

**I see you, your collected violent distortions, the rage**
**you assume, your sword in its ruthless downward assault,**
**swing, strike past, dark mass amputated, and I am set free.**

**V**

## The Hollow

**The burn was received, betrayal**
**like a thousand strikes**
**on the same spot - ripping off**
**first my skin, then sinews.**
**A burn like a confession of hate,**
**masquerading for years as love.**

**That side has now descended, into the hollow,**
**along with all that burns and whose heat**
**cannot be tamed or reconciled.**
**I put a steel sheet over that hollow,**
**cover it for good and breathe easy in my escape,**
**tie my hair back and sing loudly with**
**my joy and intellect intact - with my trust in**
**God unharmed, my language rejuvenated.**

***Layers of arsenal fumes, rising,***
***I see you below in that hollow***
***hunched over, lamenting***
***a sickly self-pitying cry.***
***Already your hands and arms, up to your elbows,***
***buried like stakes deep in the unforgiving ground.***
***You cannot move. You cannot hope***
***for better days.***
***Your hissing is useless, and the venom from your lips***
***dissipates into nothing as it leaves your gaping mouth.***
***You, stuck in a frozen mire, cut off***
***from the current, condensed, calcified, and stalled,***
***with only your conceit, your woe-is-me!***
***to give you voice, some***
***semblance of rudimentary comfort.***

# Unseen

**The folly of faith,**
**impossible to describe,**
**seeing the roots, the buds**
**connected but separated**
**by the trunk - crusty,**
**immovable, a thick stick**
**stubborn realty.**

**The buds are the fruit of faith**
**as the roots drink, low, snake-like in**
**their undercavern - moist with the fluids of earth,**
**tougher than the surrounding insects and worms,**
**carrying substance through**
**the almost impenetrable wood -**
**wood for paper, wood for footbridges,**
**and for building beaver dams**
**and a multitude of varied homes.**

**When the buds bloom, we smell the blossom**
**hold their fragile sides, unplucked inside a gentle touch.**
**Then the songbirds come, the squirrels, the first summer's light, and the buds turn into apples, peaches, a succulent cherry.**

**The faith of the root is actualized.**
**We consume, satiated by the sweet flesh and nectar -**
**nutrients flow into fingertips, bellies-centred,**
**calf muscles, and our brains, fed,**
**able to charge unchartered pathways,**
**revolutionary understanding, shoulder altruism.**

**Faith is this folly that only**
**the poor in expectation can see,**
**faith as fodder for the foal, necessary**
**as the change of seasons, faith**
**that begins**
**in the root-blood-bond darkness**
**far below.**

# Blinding

**Unyielding heat**
**joined to the glowing trees**
**and take-away flowers.**

**My pleasure is broken**
**like a dream when waking.**

**Today I vanquish my delusions, eat**
**the green strawberry and circle**
**my loneliness, ghostly but growing**
**bones and ligaments.**

**My choice feels like a crime**
**when there are only some I can help save,**
**when my soft embrace must yield to stiff arms**

**and August has just begun -**
**no shade, no signs of rain.**

## Sun-spill  Son-spell

**By myself, I was deceived,**
**led by a false enthusiasm**
**of generosity that fizzled out**
**when reality made its claim.**

**Devotion is rare, even rarer**
**is the true gift given,**
**void of expectation**
**on the receiver.**
**Faith is holding emptiness with God,**
**a fountain that recycles its flow, continuously.**
**Jesus is a shock**
**out of human nature into God's nature.**
**Jesus is a higher level of heaven revealed,**

**but hard to keep the veil open when the world restricts,**
**presses down with its laws, telling us otherwise.**

**I see a house.**
**we will enter that house.**
**In that house,**
**food and love will be abundant.**
**In this house, we will be invited,**
**where the walls have a pulse,**
**a warm blood rhythm.**
**From this house**
**we will witness a smiling flock of geese overhead,**
**crying out a simultaneous song, crying out**
**with such vitality it usurps then transforms**

**the dark familiar, absolving our debts**
**with that song, along with every other bond**
**embroidered to our skin that made us weep**
**from their inexorable weight and prophecy.**

# Half Circle

**Too late, in the earth,**
**dug out and consumed.**
**A cramp in the thigh you named**
**your own, the affronted sensibility**
**of your self-importance.**
**That cramp took out your uterus,**
**took your home on the hill**
**and put you in a basement,**
**took me out too**
**of any further equation.**
**Too far, the fracture thickened into**
**a chasm, your mind found release**
**in bold yellows and reds**
**because it could no longer bear**
**the subtleties of existence.**
**You turned a monster into an effigy**
**of hope, sold justice for titillating fascism.**
**I am trying to forgive you, accept your death,**
**the hardened block cell walls of your mind,**
**once so fecund with inquisitiveness,**
**abstraction and high atmosphere.**
**Sometimes mercy comes as a shock,**
**a rippling destructive wave, speeding, breaking**
**the floorboards, the ceiling, so there is no recourse**
**but to run into the wide open, pajamas on, grief**
**on naked display.**
**Grief over our desecrated love,**
**over never knowing another morning**
**without raw anxiety, with allegiance only**
**to the immediacy of obvious uncertainty,**
**loss, the possibility of more loss.**

**God is on my doorstep**
**like a swarm of sparrows saying**
**I love you  I love you**
**I am here**

**I have been broken by this unhappy year,**
**still breaking, it seems.**
**I cannot piece myself together.**

**God arrives as a blue jay at my back window,**
**speaks, and I know the past is a finished dance,**
**necessary, sealed.**

# Figurine

**In the middle, anywhere,**
**the Earth becomes a song,**
**a vision of its collected souls.**
**As the snake inches forward, then**
**consumes the still frog, the frog**
**thinking its camouflage and stillness**
**is enough protection, but it is not,**
**as high above nebulas continue to spin and stars**
**touch stars and explode.**
**How much compromise is permitted**
**before love loses its purity, its testimony to truth?**
**What is the threshold, obvious when reached,**
**when the deformity is complete and love**
**melts into a wickless waxy blob,**
**incapable of sustaining any flame?**

**In my mind, I am seeing you**
**as when I was 15, 21, 45,**
**seeing your dazzling eyes,**
**the lightness in your walk,**
**your unencumbered joy, remembering**
**our summers spent in Montreal, Phoenix, Toronto,**
**in renewing conversations and camaraderie.**
**In my mind, I will think of you**
**as one who has died and is not coming back.**
**Another spirit gone, to be thankful for**
**that you once were - like my father,**
**my many cats, rats, birds, big black dog**
**and my mentor.**

**You slipped on the mud, slipped up**
**and couldn't return or find the courage to keep on the path.**
**You detoured into the plastic city, with plastic**
**placements, plastic bedrooms and digital relationships.**
**Poverty is hard, but still,**
**I expected so much more from you.**
**I thought we would take this to the end together –**
**as family does.**
**You broke our pact. You broke my heart.**
**The whole of a heavy high wave has collapsed on my back,**
**and the once singular flourishing mountain that was us,**
**has cracked down its centre, nothing left**
**but a barren flatland -**
**not a sprout, not a sound, not an insect,**
**soulless, seedless, dreamless, forsaken.**

# Hurdle

**Sorrow finds him,**
**primary, raw,**
**leave-taking, unexpected**
**as a push into freezing waters.**

**Cold sister of the kill,**
**hostile in life and in dreams.**
**It is good you are gone, I think.**
**I think it would have been better**
**if you could have gained depth,**
**and seen it through.**

**There will be grief. There will be more**
**hurting, but your ship is out on the ocean**
**and he doesn't want you back on shore,**
**for he knows, nothing is worth holding**
**that doesn't want to be held.**

**He is a Prince whose light is fed from the heavens.**
**He will experience extraordinary love,**
**raise children, hold a steady fulfilment**
**that nothing can snatch away.**

**There will be a building up after this devastation.**
**Eventually, he will see this loss as a gift,**
**a making room for a happiness**
**that requires no analysis and will not break**
**when it needs to leap.**

# Over

**The wound is the wall**
**that gelds your desire,**
**prevents the granting**
**of your destiny –**
**holder of many secrets, entrusted with**
**genius vitality, and your mind**
**leaping into the sacred fires,**
**emerging with a discovered vocabulary,**
**a fruit-heavy tree at your disposal, giver**
**of never-ending nutrients, navigating**
**a route to the divine.**

**The wound is the wall,**
**is nothing in comparison to your offering,**
**is a miniscule overcoming.**
**When you know that**
**you will have arrived on the other side -**
**the floodgates will open, your great light**
**will engulf the city, countries, and hearts**
**of many different flavours.**

**The wound was the wall**
**was part of your strength, a glass**
**to drink from and describe its taste.**
**A new proclamation**
**is on the table, telling you**
**to walk through, accept**
**your innate purified power,**
**be received, be recognized.**

# Resolved

**Forgetful, in exile,**
**in the fires of failure,**
**honouring suffering**
**like a story told in form,**
**a totem-working of visual permanence.**
**I bore my marriage**
**to the joyous wilderness in one hand,**
**and sacrilegious duty**
**in the other.**
**Today, I join these hands**
**to create stability, sanctuary,**
**creativity touching ground and discipline.**
**I burn the dead wood, releasing**
**my prisoner-identity and climb out of**
**the fishnet into deep fulfillment like**
**into a valley with a lake and untamed**
**foliage all around.**
**The pull and tug of two lives is gone,**
**tension internalized as useful energy,**
**as something to be incorporated, harnessed,**
**the generator of a mature dream – a dream**
**with no division, bound,**
**and happy to be bound.**

# Onward

**Becoming passes into being,**
**and heightened intensity**
**is restored - every moment,**
**alert and bearing anxiety**
**for the reasonable necessity it is,**
**in this time, this coming year**
**of upheaval and uncertainty.**

**No joy will ever exceed the joy**
**found when the light restored in your eyes,**
**and your arms embraced mine from the**
**hospital bed where you lay in a blue cloak**
**with tubes and needles, and your mind, finally aware,**
**your heart, at once fragile with shock and fear,**
**but vital, perpetual in its outpouring love.**

**Beautiful son, 18, eclipsing every ideal**
**with your innate wisdom, compassion and energy,**
**leaping in youthful courageous commitment, tough**
**where you need to be, strong and accomplished, kind**
**like the sun is kind by rising, and the hawk**
**as it flies overhead calling, driving home the mystery**
**and the majesty of the dream.**

## Bookends

**I have this day to carry**
**like a large stone or like**
**a child.**
**I can whisper my grievances**
**to the pockets of clouds**
**in an otherwise clear sky**
**or I can make pictures with them**
**in my mind, be seduced**
**by their wispy ever-changing boundaries,**
**divulging the shapes of creatures**
**I can't even name, or branches**
**extending to the edge of the sun.**

**I can take these last days of freedom**
**and deliver them to the bitter hunter**
**before their time or I can hold myself**
**proper, mortal, clothed in only the day, sober,**
**bound by neither inevitability nor expectation.**

**The day has many appendages, tricks and snares.**
**It is a matter of riding clear, slightly raised**
**above the ground, able to glide**
**like in the dream I often have, above the bubble,**
**sometimes above the trees, moving natural,**
**past obstacles and footholds, just enjoying the breeze,**
**the ease of a steady self-directed pace,**
**and even stopping for meals,**
**leashed to necessity as I glide,**
**as I hold a rock, a rose**
**in either hand.**

## Down Between

**Down between**
**this between**
**the walls of dignity and duty.**

**Death tells me to sleep,**
**close the shades and curl up.**

**The future is a mountain,**
**madness with no clear line**
**of victory.**
**The future is a necklace**
**I broke but must somehow mend**
**and try to wear.**

**I refuse this burden**
**too blob-like, inhospitable to bear.**
**I refuse the harm of martyrdom,**
**the distorted secrets divulged in dreams.**

**Nail it to the wall, pour boiled water**
**on it and let it cook until it no longer bleeds.**
**End this relationship as it reduces your strength**
**to a failed conclusion.**

**Flood the garden, drain it**
**and plant chrysanthemums.**

# Lantern

**I have made my prayers,**
**threw the disc and boiled**
**the water.**

**The wind is still**
**so I must be still.**
**When it moves, I will rise up**
**and move with it.**

**The stillness is not a coffin,**
**nor is it emptiness,**
**only a time of settling,**
**internal exploration**
**and four-wall refuge.**

**Plugged, unplugged,**
**a point of arrival and departure -**
**I will stay, listening like a small bird**
**is always listening, ready for flight,**
**ready to be initiated into a greater world**
**to match the poetry in my mind.**

**When I will move forward,**
**I have no clue, not yet.**
**That I will move forward is inevitable, so**
**I will not wrestle the quiet,**
**will not feel myself abandoned.**

**I hear a faint breeze moving**
**over there, over there.**
**I think I hear the first syllables**
**of my name.**

# Rescue

**End of the day, relenting,**
**easing off the mighty restlessness**
**that overtook the morning**
**and most of the afternoon.**

**I know the deeds of my happiness**
**and the hot flesh branding of my imprisonment.**
**I know as I held council with the speakers**
**in my mind – all of them directing me**
**to wide open freedom and teamwork**
**to stave off the forces of death**
**and unrighteous burial.**

**They tell me it is time to close fast the wounds**
**that siphon out our power, be brave**
**as if we were in a deserted city on a mountain**
**surrounded by a rising sea and shouting winds**
**clanking their lock-fast swallowing chains.**

**Hold out they tell me, on the highest tower,**
**at the highest point, and never**
**let our trust become captive to fear.**

**They tell me, even though we look right,**
**we look left, seeing nothing but sky and clouds,**
**even though our ankles and knees are already immersed,**
**as the smells of fishy salt fill our nostrils,**
**holding our hands above the pressing doom,**
**engage with God, they tell me.**

**All at once, the voices tell me,**
**stand equal, and in that equality,**
**the light will come.**

**Let us be one and we will know mercy,**
**stronger than gravity, than all of our bones combined.**
**The light will come and it will love us,**
**conquering, alleviating the final struggle.**

# Cage of Many Pockets and Layers

**Lead,**
**into the land of vermin,**
**infesting the once blooming shores,**
**past the emergency-alarm, into**
**living fires, boiling and sharp in**
**their arrogant countenance.**

**Alone on a humble rock, standing -**
**arms folded, then stretched wide and up.**
**I take the hand and am led to a land**
**that tests my dignity and my resolve.**
**Many voices I must lose, people to leave behind.**

**The ship is the hand**
**leading through levels of horror**
**until the gate opens**
**to the possibility for redemption.**

**Wings of demons block the sky - pilgrimage eternal,**
**shaking off pity for the futile swarm moving**
**like lips of a mouth moving that offers no sound or groan.**

**My mind is tied to heaven, committed to resurgence.**
**My heart breaks but it is still whole, leaving,**
**being led over the land of naught, where there is plenty**
**of self-righteous indignation, self-sorrowing gleam**
**and the shadows,**
**led through and over**
**flailing limbs, bodies multiplying –**
**a thickening mass, swirling, swirling…**

# Wedding Band

**So much already surprised us,**
**the seizure thinning of sanity, thickening**
**chaotic bile.**
**The loss, barely bearable,**
**the ineffectualness of love,**
**all kaleidoscopes shattered, every facet of our beings,**
**bent to, immersed in, fragility.**

**It wasn't the stars -**
**they are always saying**
**hoot! and ahhhh!**
**it has never been them nor**
**their sway upon our inner equilibrium and**
**our outer balancing of gravity.**
**It wasn't even how deep and involved our prayers were**
**or even our feeble masks of courage,**
**denting our dignity so we could have a new form to try on,**
**taste, and learn what taste is, yet again.**

**What it was and is is chance,**
**the dispelling of random energy until the whole illusion grows**
**transparent – and we, divinely shocked out of**
**our complacency, our certainty,**
**resemble helpless fledglings, crushed**
**by a fall.**

**What it is is rising,**
**rising from that, still broken,**
**incapable of flight, but**
**capable of asking God**
**to lift us and wait with faith**
**for the rising up.**

**What it is is leaving**
**our crushed shells while still inhabiting them,**
**living for the fountain-spring, the miracle,**
**not working within the natural laws, not**
**manipulating those laws with tailspin good luck charms,**
**knowing the miracle is in our leaving,**
**accepting our unknowing**
**in this bright surrender, this marriage vow,**
**river received, inception.**

# Publication Acknowledgments

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**The poems from the section Tadpoles Find the Sun were published as a separate book *Tadpoles Find the Sun* by Cyberwit, 2020.**

**All poems in *Ways of Mercy* are all written and copyrighted by © Allison Grayhurst, 2020/2021.**

# About the Author

***Allison Grayhurst*** **is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Four of her poems were nominated for "Best of the Net" in 2015/2018, and one eight-part story-poem was nominated for "Best of the Net" in 2017. She has over 1,300 poems published in more than 500 international journals and anthologies.**

**Her book Somewhere Falling was published by Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcepic Book, in Vancouver in 1995. Since then she has published eighteen other books of poetry and five collections with Edge Unlimited Publishing. Prior to the publication of Somewhere Falling she had a poetry book published, Common Dream, and four chapbooks published by The Plowman. Her poetry chapbook The River is Blind was published by Ottawa publisher above/ground press December 2012. In 2014 her chapbook Surrogate Dharma was published by Kind of a Hurricane Press, Barometric Pressures Author Series. In 2015, her book No Raft – No Ocean was published by Scars Publications.**

**Her book Make the Wind was published in 2016 by Scars Publications. As well, her book Trial and Witness – selected**

**poems, was published in 2016 by Creative Talents Unleashed (CTU Publishing Group). More recently, her book *Tadpoles Find the Sun* was published by Cyberwit, August 2020.**

**In 2020, her work was translated into Chinese and published in"Rendition of International Poetry Quarterly" and in "Poetry Hall".**

**In 2018, her book *Sight at Zero*, was listed #34 on CBC's "Your Ultimate Canadian Poetry List".**

**Collaborating with Allison Grayhurst on the lyrics, Vancouver-based singer/songwriter/musician Diane Barbarash has transformed eight of Allison Grayhurst's poems into songs, creating a full album. "River – Songs from the poetry of Allison Grayhurst" released October 2017.**

**Allison Grayhurst is a vegan for the animals. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay.**

**Some of the places her work has appeared in include Parabola (Alone & Together print issue summer 2012); SUFI Journal (Featured Poet in Issue #95, Sacred Space); Elephant Journal; Literary Orphans; Blue Fifth Review; The American Aesthetic; The Brooklyn Voice; Five2One; Agave Magazine; JuxtaProse Literary Magazine, Drunk Monkeys; Now Then Manchester; South Florida Arts Journal; Gris-Gris; The Muse – An International Journal of Poetry, Storm Cellar, morphrog (sister publication of Frogmore Papers); New Binary Press Anthology; Straylight Literary Magazine (print); Chicago Record Magazine, The Milo Review; Foliate Oak Literary Magazine; The Antigonish Review; Dalhousie Review; The New Quarterly; Wascana Review; Poetry Nottingham International; The Cape Rock; Ayris; Journal of Contemporary Anglo-Scandinavian Poetry; The Toronto Quarterly; Fogged Clarity, Existere; Boston Poetry Magazine; Decanto; White Wall Review.**

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# Quotes

**“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader’s personal involvement. Grayhurst’s poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance,” *Kyp Harness*, legendary singer/songwriter, cartoonist, author of ‘Wigford Rememberies’ and ‘The Abandoned’, Nightwood Editons; www.kypharness.net**

**“Allison Grayhurst is the Queen of Catharsis. Her poems are like cathedrals witnessing and articulating in unflinching graphic detail the gritty angst and grief of life, while taking it to rare clarity, calm and comfort in an otherwise confusing world of deception, mediocrity and degradation. Allison Grayhurst takes the sludge of life, and with fearless sharpness of eye and heart she spins it free of maggots with the depth of honour and passion. Allison Grayhurst's work is haunting, majestic and cleansing, often leaving one breathless in the wake of its intelligence, hope, faith and love amidst the muck of life. Many of Allison Grayhurst's poems are simply masterpieces booming with thunderous insight begging to be in Bartlett's Quotations, lines such as "I drink necessity’s authority." Nothing is wishy-washy in the realm of Allison Grayhurst. Allison Grayhurst's work is sustaining, enriching, and deepening for the soul to read... a light of sanity in the world. As a poet, Allison Grayhurst**

**is a lighthouse of intelligent honour... indeed, intelligence rips through her work like white water," *Taylor Jane Green*, BA, RIHR, CHT, Registered Spiritual Psychotherapist and author of Swan Wheeler: A North American Mythology and The Rise of Eros.**

**"Grayhurst's rapturous outpouring of imagery makes her poems easily enjoyable … Like a sear the poet seeks to fathom sensual and spiritual experience through the images of a dream," *Canadian Literature*.**

**"Her poems read like the journal entries of a mystic – perhaps that what they are. They are abstract and vivid, like a dreamy manifestation of soul. This is the best way, in prose, one can describe the music which is … the poetry of Allison Grayhurst," *Blaise Wigglesworth*, Oh! Magazine: Ryerson's Arts and Culture Voice.**

**"Grayhurst's poetry is a translucent, ethereal dream in which words push through the fog, always searching, struggling, and reaching for the powerful soul at its heart. Her work is vibrant and shockingly original," *Beach Holme Publishers*.**

**"Allison Grayhurst's poetry appears visceral, not for the faint of heart, and moves forward with a dynamism, with a frenetic pulse. If you seek the truth, the physical blood and bones, then, by all means, open the world into which we were all born," *Anne Burke*, poet, regional representative for Alberta on the League of Canadian Poets' Council, and chair of the Feminist Caucus.**

**"Read at your peril. You will never look at this world in quite the same way again. Your eye will instinctively search the sky for eagles and scan the dark earth for the slightest movement of smallest ant, your heart will reach for tall mountains, bathe in the most intimate of passions and in the grain and grit of our**

**earth. Such is Allison Grayhurst. Such is her poetry," *Eric M. Vogt*, poet and author.**

**"Grayhurst is a great Canadian poet. All of Allison Grayhurst's poetry is original, sometimes startling, and more often than not, powerful. Anyone who loves modern poetry that does not follow the common path will find Grayhurst complex, insightful, and as good a poet as anyone writing in the world today. Grayhurst's poetry volumes are highly, highly recommended," *Tom Davis*, poet, novelist and educator.**

**"Biting into the clouds and bones of desire and devotion, love and grief, Allison Grayhurst basks the reader, with breathtaking eloquence, in an elixir of words. Like lace, the elegance is revealed by what isn't said. This is stunning poetry," *Angela Hryniuk*, author of 'no visual scars'.**

**"Allison Grayhurst is a poet whose work is characterized by startling imagery and uncompromising emotion, whose pieces have appeared in prestigious magazines. Lights, darks, colors, and passions intertwine throughout the pages of her work," *Louise E. Allin*, Literature and Language.**

**"When I read Allison Grayhurst's poetry, I am compelled by the intensity and strength of her spirituality. Her personal experience of God drives her poetry. With honesty and vulnerability, she fleshes out the profound mystery of knowing at once both the beauty and terror of God's love, both freedom and obedience, deep joy and sorrow, both being deeply rooted in but also apart from the world, and lastly, both life and death. Her poems undulate through these paradoxes with much feeling and often leave me breathless, shaken. Allison Grayhurst's poems are both beautiful and difficult to behold," *Anna Mark*, poet and teacher.**

**“The breath of roles covered in Allison Grayhurst’s poetry is exceptional. Even poems covering similar perspectives express subtle distinctions, distinctions which add depth to the poet’s larger themes. The cohesive psychology of the poet is clear, allowing for long reads and re-reads.” says author *Patrick Linsenmeyer.***

**“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry has a tribal and timeless feeling, reminiscent of the Biblical commentary in Ecclesiastes,” *Cristina Deptula*, editor of Synchronized Chaos.**

# Books by Allison Grayhurst

**Paperbacks with Edge Unlimited Publishing:**

**Book 1: Journey of the Awakening, 1997, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CH6WO5Y; ISBN-10: 1478189339; ISBN-13: 978-1478189336**
**Book 2: The Longing to Be, 1998, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CH94ZNK; ISBN-10: 1478197684; ISBN-13: 978-1478197683**
**Book 3: Death and Other Possibilities, 2000, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHB8M0K; ISBN-10: 1478208163; ISBN-13: 978-1478208167**
**Book 4: Outliving the Inevitable, 2002, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHBYD1W; ISBN-10: 1478220295; ISBN-13: 978-1478220299**
**Book 5: Into My Mortal, 2004, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHFGOB0; ISBN-10: 147822858X; ISBN-13: 978-1478228585**
**Book 6: Red thread - Black thread, 2006, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHQOJFW; ISBN-10: 1478244186; ISBN-13: 978-1478244189**
**Book 7: The Many Lights of Eden, 2008, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHTR6IQ; ISBN-10: 1478249153; ISBN-13: 978-1478249153**
**Book 8: Pushing Through The Jelly Fire, 2010, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHXZYOA; ISBN-10: 1478256567; ISBN-13: 978-1478256564**
**Book 9: The River is Blind, 2012, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CICVQ6K; ISBN-10: 1478280131; ISBN-13: 978-1478280132**

**Book 10: Seamless – A Collection of Love Poems, 2012, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CIFTU0G; ISBN-10: 1479304816; ISBN-13: 978-1479304813**
**Book 11: If I Get There – Poems of Faith and Doubt, a collection, 2012, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CIZQGI0; ISBN-10: 1479348740; ISBN-13: 978-1479348749**
**Book 12: Wallpaper Stars, 2013, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00DQBDZAW; ISBN-10: 1490499172; ISBN-13: 978-1490499178**
**Book 13: For Every Rain - a collection of early poems, 2013, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00E6Y47OQ; ISBN-10: 1491065656; ISBN-13: 978-1491065655**
**Book 14: Jumana and Perfect Love - two poetic prose pieces, 2013, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00E74B45A; ISBN-10: 1491081465; ISBN-13: 978-1491081464**
**Book 15: Walkways, 2014, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00OR1VVH4; ISBN-10: 1502792133; ISBN-13: 978-1502792136**
**Book 16: As My Blindness Burns - three long poems, 2014, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00OS7HFZY; ISBN-10: 1502838265; ISBN-13: 978-1502838261**
**Book 17: Our Children Are Orchards – collected poems about animals, children and pregnancy, 2015, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00TZDDP5K; ISBN-10: 1508582920 ISBN-13: 978-1508582922**
**Book 18: Fire and more, 2016, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B01BO7P7DM; ISBN-13: 978-1517327279; ISBN-10: 151732727X**
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**Book 20: The Fault of Sages, 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B075JT6X6B; ISBN-13: 978-1544785646; ISBN-10: 154478564X**

**Book 21: Sight at Zero – selected poems (1988 to 2017), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ASIN: B075Q7TDJK; ISBN-13: 978-1975894016; ISBN-10: 1975894014**
**Book 22: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 1 of 5), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ASIN: B076ZTQNX5; ISBN-13: 978-1978078833; ISBN-10: 1978078838**
**Book 23: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 2 of 5), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ASIN: B076ZSMPMB; ISBN-13: 978-1978106642; ISBN-10: 1978106645**
**Book 24: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 3 of 5), Edge Unlimited Publishing: ASIN: B076ZYQNHP; ISBN-13: 978-1978341272; ISBN-10: 197834127X**
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**Book 27: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - Collections from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 6), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B07713CLWC; ISBN-13: 978-1979275750; ISBN-10: 1979275750**
**Book 28: The Sculptures of Allison Grayhurst, 2018, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B078TJTY37; ISBN-13: 978-1983534270; ISBN-10: 1983534277**
**Book 29: Animal Culture (rules of commitment), 2018, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B07H1WRD5K; ISBN-13: 978-1719094962; ISBN-10: 1719094969**
**Book 30: If I Knew This Haunting, 2019, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B07VQWS6PZ; ISBN-13: 9781082365133; ISBN-10: 1082365130**

**Book 31: Snapshots (excerpts of poems on images), 2019, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ASIN: B07PQZV4P4; ISBN-13: 978-1090605115; ISBN-10: 1090605110**
**Book 32: Ways of Mercy, 2021, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ASIN: B08YQR3ZQC; ASIN: B08YTRYMWW; ISBN-13: 9798720154585**
**Book 33: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst – completed works for 2018 to 2021 (Volume 7), 2021, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ISBN: 9798740225913**

## Paperbacks by other publishers:

**Tadpoles Find the Sun, 2020, Cyberwit; ISBN-10: 9390202558; ISBN-13: 978-9390202553**
**Trial and Witness, selected poems, 2016, Creative Talents Unleashed or CTU Publishing; ISBN-13: 978-0692702529; ISBN-10: 0692702520; ASIN: B01II9O63G**
**Make the Wind, 2016, Scars Publications; ISBN-10: 1530924995; ISBN-13: 978-1530924998**
**No Raft- No Ocean, 2015, Scars Publications; ISBN-10: 1518842046; ISBN-13: 978-1518842047**
**Common Dream, 1991, Edge Unlimited; ISBN-10: 0969542313 ISBN-13: 978-0969542315**
**Somewhere Falling, 1995, Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcepic Book; ISBN-10: 0888783655; ISBN-13: 978-0888783653**

## Chapbooks:

**Surrogate Dharma, 2014, Barometric Pressures Author Series, Kind of a Hurricane Press**
**The River is Blind, 2012, above/ground press; ISBN-10: 1-897224-99-0; ISBN-13: 978-1-897224-99-1**

**Four chapbooks published under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain:**
**Jumana, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 0-929002-36-9**
**Perfect Love, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 0-929002-66-0**
**Before the Dawn, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 0-929002-11-3**
**Joshua's Shoulder, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 1-55072-025-2**

"Allison Grayhurst's poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader's personal involvement. Grayhurst's poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance." Kyp Harness, singer/songwriter, author of Wigford Rememberies and The Abandoned.

Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Five times nominated for "Best of the Net", 2015/2017/2018, she has over 1300 poems published in over 500 international journals. She has 25 published books of poetry, 12 collections and 6 chapbooks. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay; www.allisongrayhurst.com

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